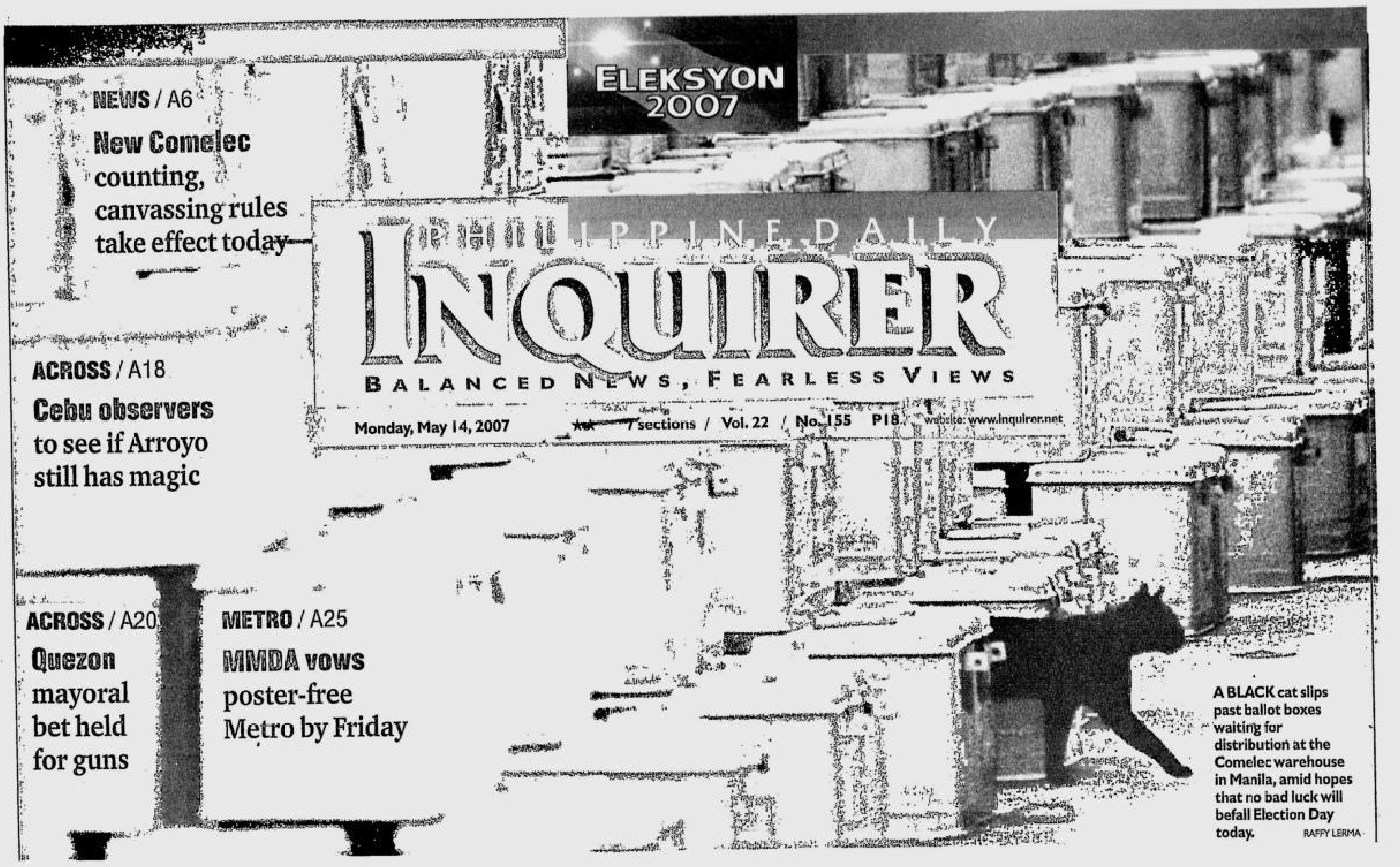

A BLACK cat slips past ballot boxes waiting for distribution at the Comelec warehouse in Manila, amid hopes that no bad luck will befall Election Day today. RAFFY LERMA

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Monday, May 14, 2007 7 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 155 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

NEWS / A6

New Comelec counting, canvassing rules take effect today

ACROSS / A18

Cebu observers to see if Arroyo still has magic

ACROSS / A20

Quezon mayoral bet held for guns

METRO / A25

MMDA vows poster-free Metro by Friday

All eyes on Mindanao

TU, GO each claims 7 of its bets will win

By Fe Zamora and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE, the Genuine Opposition (GO) and the administration's Team Unity (TU) were engaged in a battle of predictions.

It will be seven or eight GO candidates winning the senatorial race, according to its spokesperson Adel Tamano.

Not so, said a TU senatorial candidate.

It will be an upset "if we do not win the majority of the seats," said Vicente Sotto III, a former senator who surprisingly has not figured well in the surveys.

"We have the better political machinery, so why should we be considered the underdogs here?" Sotto said. "We've done our homework and the results will be validated in the only survey that matters, the election."

TU media director Ben Evardone said that getting only half of the 12 Senate seats at stake today would be a "big disappointment" for the Arroyo administration.

"GO may be the darling of the coffee shop crowds but these are the people who do not vote and only sneer at the electoral process. The hard work is at the grass roots and

TU, GO/ A21

GMA duplicating Marcos poll machine

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE COUNTRY SITS ON A political tinder box as Filipinos go to the polls today to decide whether to give President Macapagal-Arroyo a fresh vote of confidence on the way she has ruled during the past six years.

Immediately confronting the voters are two issues that have overshadowed all other issues—the high level of political violence and the heightened public concern over election cheating under an administration fighting for its life and needing to win the election at all cost.

The fear of election rigging and cheating stems from the fact that, after six years in office, Ms Arroyo has consolidated her power and built a political and bu-

GMA/ A23

POLL PREPARATIONS

Comelec, monitors, observers: Die is cast

By Winston A. Marbella
Contributor

ANALYSIS

TO MAKE TODAY'S ELECTIONS work, the Commission on Elections has left no stone unturned in its preparations.

More than a million bogus names or names of deceased voters have been purged from voters' lists. Poll watch groups are doing further verification. The lists have been sent to election officers of all cities and municipalities, so people could check their precinct assignments before Election Day.

All election paraphernalia—ballots, election returns (ERs) and certificates of canvass (COCs)—were completed last month and deliveries under police escort began on May 2.

The materials were stored under surveillance using 24-hour cameras, with media, major political parties and poll watch groups able to monitor them. Security markings were used on ERs and COCs.

The new Comelectxtline handles precinct queries, incident reports and voter ques-

COMELEC/ A13

FAST FACTS

7	a.m. Precincts open
3	p.m. Precincts close
17,889	Elective posts
12	Senators
220	Representatives—District
55	Representatives—Party-list (PL)
81	Governors/Vice Governors
770	Provincial Board Members
118	City Mayors/Vice Mayors
1,322	City Councilors
1,510	Municipal Mayors/Vice Mayors
12,092	Municipal Councilors
308,222	Total number of precincts
36	Candidates for senator
91	PL groups contending
57	PL representatives from
40	PL groups elected since 1998 elections

RESEARCH: MARICAR TOLOSA

WEATHER

Northeastern Luzon, Mindanao and Eastern Visayas will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be cloudy with rainshowers.

Manila: Partly Cloudy
Baguio City: Partly Cloudy
Laoag City: Partly Cloudy
Clark/Subic: Partly Cloudy
Batangas: Partly Cloudy
Legazpi: Partly Cloudy
Iloilo: Partly Cloudy
Cebu: Partly Cloudy
Tacloban: Cloudy with Rains
Gen. Santos: Cloudy with Rains
Cagayan de Oro: Cloudy with Rains
Davao: Cloudy with Rains

RESEARCH: KATE PEDROSO

VOTER'S PROFILE

More than **45 million** registered voters nationwide

5.7 M	National Capital Region
5.7 M	Region IV-A or Calabarzon
5.1 M	Region III or Central Luzon
3.7 M	Region VI or Western Visayas
3.5 M	Region VII or Central Visayas
Provinces:	
2.1 M	Cebu
1.5 M	Negros Occidental
1.43 M	Bulacan
1.37 M	Cavite
1.36 M	Pangasinan

Mostly

- 25-54 years old
- married
- Roman Catholic
- at least finished high school
- employed
- lower-middle class household

AGE GROUP

10.8%	18-24 years old
26.2 %	25-34 years old

comprise over a third of the voting population

20.6 %	35-44 years old
23%	45-54 years old

comprise over 40 % of the registered voters

19.4 %	55 years old & up

comprise around a fifth of the voting population

CIVIL STATUS

75.8 %	mostly married
19.6 %	single
4.6 %	have partners

RELIGION

75.7 %	Catholic
3.9 %	Aglipayan
3.8 %	Islam
2.8%	Iglesia ni Cristo
2.7 %	Protestant
10.7 %	Others
0.8 %	El Shaddai

EDUCATION

45 %	have at least finished high school and attended vocational courses or some years of college.
30%	have at least graduated from elementary or attended some years in high school
13 %	have not attended schooling or just attended some years of elementary
11 %	have at least finished college or post-graduate studies

Concentration of undereducated voters :

32 %	Eastern Visayas
23 %	Central-Southern Mindanao (Region XI, XII and ARMM)

ECONOMIC CLASS

8.5%	3.8 million class ABC	(middle to upper classes)
61.5%	27.7 million class D	(lower-middle class)
30 %	13.5 million class E	(extremely lower class)

SOURCE : SWS SURVEY APRIL 2007, COMELEC

INQUIRER RESEARCH : MEL LAWRENCE DE GUZMAN / INQFOGRAPHIC : LYNETT VILLARIBA

Foreign observers can't stop poll fraud in South

By Ryan D. Rosauro
Inquirer Mindanao

AS ELECTION FRENZY GRIPS the nation, poll watchdogs and foreign observers have been beset with reports about how the elections are already over, at least in some areas of Mindanao, even before the first votes have been cast.

Even the presence of foreign observers is not expected to deter poll fraud, especially massive vote-buying, according to Hadj Abdullah Dalidig, chair of the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) in Lanao del Sur.

Dalidig on Saturday said that many of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) officials responsible for the alleged cheating in the 2004 presidential election were still around.

"And they were never sanctioned for

ALL EYES/ A21

Why I'm voting for Kapatiran

By Melba Padilla Maggay
Contributor

COMMENTARY

THE SOCIAL WEATHER STATIONS finding that 77 percent of the people would vote according to conscience whether or not the candidate will win is welcome news to those who wish to see the end of the "*segurista*" (sure thing) mentality that keeps qualified candidates from winning simply because they do not, at first instance, fig-

WHY I'M/ A4

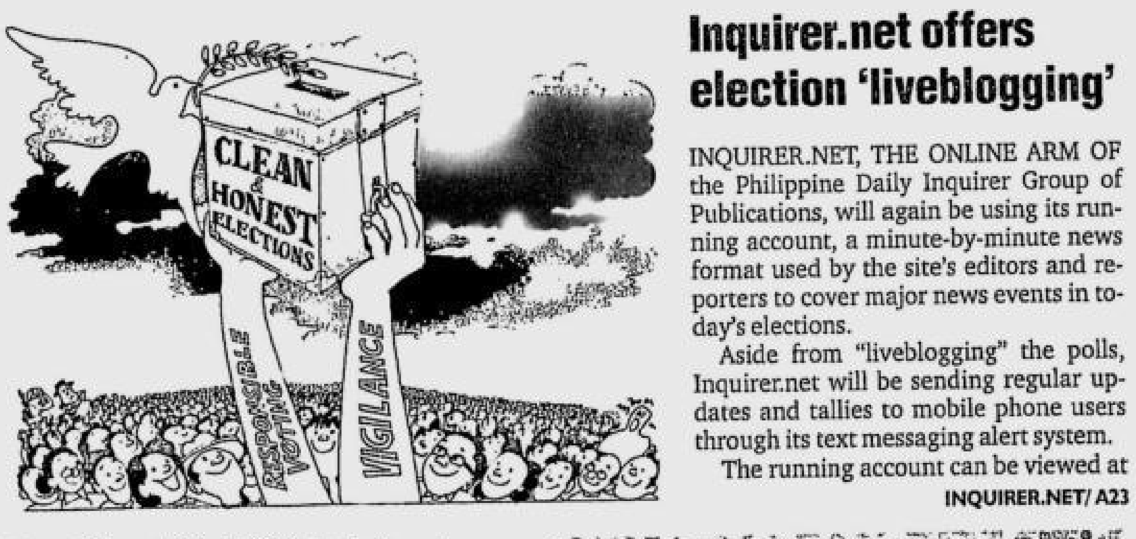
'Most corrupt' tag on RP clarified

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE HONG KONG-BASED POLITICAL and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) said it did not single out the Philippines as the most corrupt country in Asia, noting that its report had been "abused by people for their own political ends."

PERC's clarification came nearly two months after the INQUIRER came out on March 14 with the banner headline, "RP 'most corrupt' in Asia—PERC," which was

'MOST CORRUPT'/ A22



Inquirer.net offers election 'liveblogging'

INQUIRER.NET, THE ONLINE ARM OF the Philippine Daily Inquirer Group of Publications, will again be using its running account, a minute-by-minute news format used by the site's editors and reporters to cover major news events in today's elections.

Aside from "liveblogging" the polls, Inquirer.net will be sending regular updates and tallies to mobile phone users through its text messaging alert system.

The running account can be viewed at

INQUIRER.NET/ A23

EZ2
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SUERTRES
Mid-Day 9 6 1 | Evening 8 9 8
(All in exact order)

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Violence rages on eve of polls; 4 more killed

By Inquirer Southern Luzon, Inquirer Visayas, Inquirer Central Luzon and Inquirer Northern Luzon

AS THE THREE-MONTH CAMPAIGN PERIOD ended, four more people were reported killed and six others wounded in election-related attacks, raising the death toll to 116, officials said.

Late Saturday, a policeman in Abra was shot dead, while responding to an attack on a mayoral candidate's supporter in the remote town of Danglas.

Senior Supt. Alexander Pumecha, provincial police director, said SPO1 Jeoffrey Ponce and five policemen were on their way to check a report that some men shot at the Mitsubishi Pajero of mayoral candidate Esther Bernos when they were ambushed.

Ponce died while being taken to the Abra Provincial Hospital in Bangued town.

In Masbate, a civilian agent of the Philippine Navy was shot dead on Saturday by two assailants with whom he was talking in Barangay Poblacion, Claveria.

The victim was identified as Johnny Enalpe, a resident of Pilar, Sorsogon, but assigned to the Philippine Navy station in Claveria, Masbate.

Enalpe, who sustained four gunshot wounds in the head and body, died on the spot.

In Southern Leyte, an alleged ward leader of the Lakas-CMD in the province was killed on Thursday by an unidentified assailant in Lungsudaan, Barangay Asuncion, Macrohon town.

The victim was identified as Dennis Kangleon Yulo, 30, a resident of San Roque village, and reportedly a great grandson of the late Sen. Ruperto Kangleon of Leyte.

The victim was earlier seen tearing down the posters of NPC-LP candidate for Congress Roberto Castañares. Police recovered P750 in cash and a sample ballot from the victim.

In Pampanga, a village chief supporting the reelection bid of the incumbent mayor of Arayat town was killed by two men on Friday.

Senior Supt. Keith Singian, Pampanga police director, said Eugenio Manicdao, 52, village chief of Canading was aboard a barangay patrol vehicle on his way to the headquarters of Arayat Mayor Luisito Espino when the suspects overtook his vehicle in Suklayan village and shot him several times.

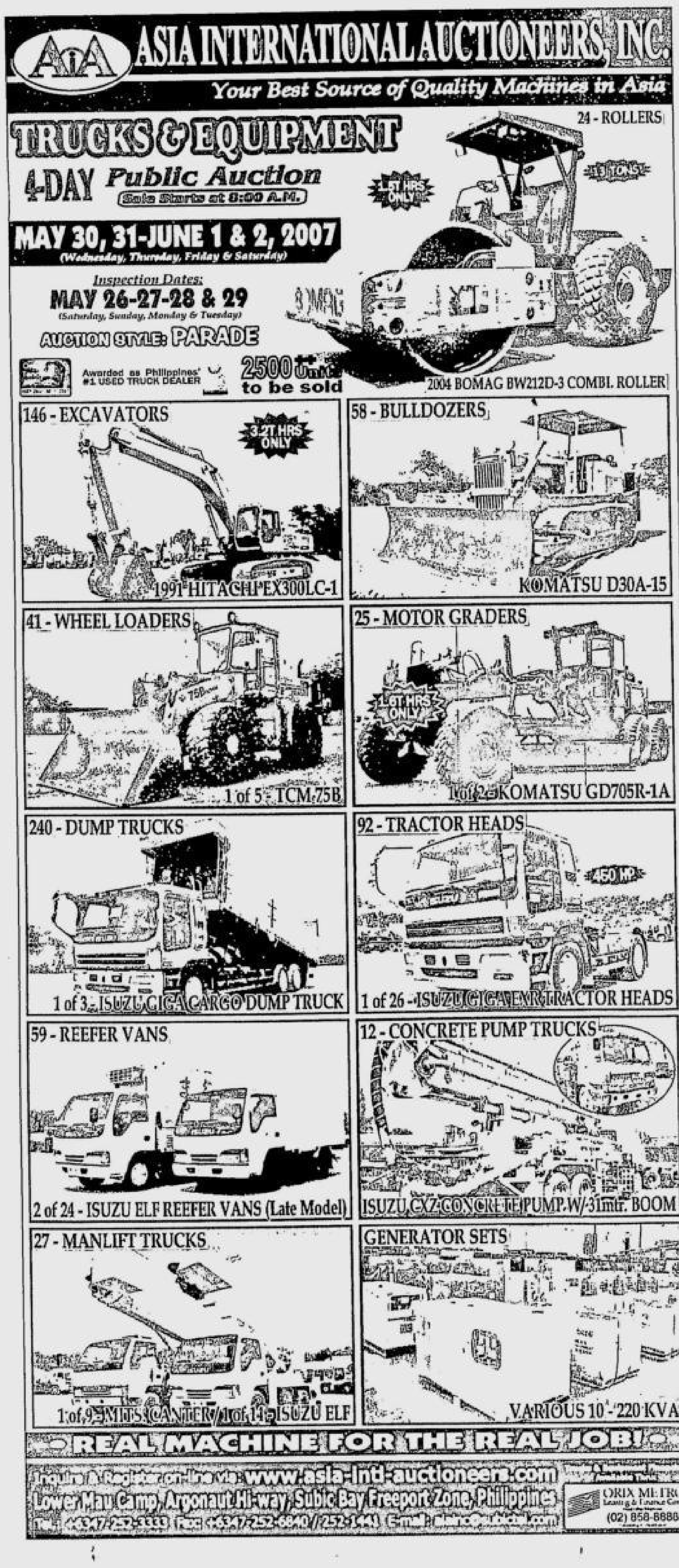
Manicdao died instantly from bullet wounds in the head and body.

Two shooting incidents involving supporters of candidates in Nueva Ecija and Isabela wounded at least five people on the eve of the elections.

Two alleged supporters of reelectionist Nueva Ecija Rep. Rodolfo Antonino were shot by civilian guards of another congressional candidate in the latter's farm in Jaen town on Sunday.

Senior Supt. Alfredo Caballes, Task Force Nueva Ecija commander, said security aides of congressional candidate Gay Padiernos (Lakas-CMD) found the two men taking videos of Padiernos' farm in Barangay Lambakin in Jaen at 1:30 p.m. Caballes said Padiernos' men confronted the two and took them to the farm. A few minutes later, gunshots rang out.

With a report from Alcuin Papa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1 of 5 - TCM 75B
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Military called out on 'extreme alert'

By Alcuin Papa

DESPITE AN AGREEMENT LIMITING MILITARY PARTICIPATION in securing today's midterm elections, the Armed Forces of the Philippines is sending out 20,000 troops to various parts of the country, particularly Mindanao, where an "extreme terror alert" has been raised.

Intelligence reports released to the media yesterday said Islamic extremists, communist insurgents and political armed groups had plans to disrupt the polls.

Of the 22 areas where the Comelec deemed it necessary to deploy military troops, 18 were in Mindanao, where a series of bombings has been linked to the al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), a regional terror network.

According to AFP spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, the troops will be deployed in parts of the provinces of Quezon, Masbate, Sorsogon, Western Samar, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, Zamboanga City, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, Compostela Valley, Davao Oriental, Davao del Sur, South Cotabato, Saranggani, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Sur, Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat.

A statement from the National Intelligence Committee (NIC) released yesterday said the terrorist threat in parts of Mindanao had "breached the critical level," prompting officials yesterday to elevate the terror alert level from "high" in the beginning of May to "extreme."

The NIC statement said last Tuesday's bomb attack in Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat, was traced to the JI. Weeks before the attack, police discovered two powerful homemade bombs in Koronadal City. On April 25, soldiers reported the interception of 25 sacks of ammonium nitrate, an ingredient used to make explosives.

Aside from Mindanao, police intelligence reports also listed seven regions and 14 provinces that may be the target of attacks by communist insurgents.

PNP intelligence chief Alejandro Lapinid said they had monitored increased activities by the rebel New People's Army (NPA) over the weekend and had received reports that they would be targeting policemen and soldiers on election duty, communication facilities, government armories, power plants and government security forces.

Lapinid identified the seven regions as Northern Luzon, Central Luzon, Southern Luzon, the Visayas, Western Mindanao, Central Mindanao and Caraga.

The 14 provinces included Pangasinan, Ilocos, Cordillera, Cagayan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Quezon, Batangas, Laguna, Mindoro, Rizal, Camarines Sur, Bohol and Panay.

He added that military units could be called in to patrol areas outside voting centers to keep out communist rebels.

Last October, the defense department, under then Secretary Avelino Cruz, and the Comelec signed an agreement limiting the participation of the military in the elections after ranking military officials were mentioned in the controversial "Hello Garci" tapes.

But with rising election violence claiming over 100 lives, current Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane announced that soldiers would still be needed to augment the police force in securing today's elections.

Areas already under Comelec control are Abra, Nueva Ecija, San Carlos City in Pangasinan, Bantayan Island in Cebu, and Valencia in Bukidnon.

Bacarro, however, stressed that soldiers would not handle the ballot boxes and had been advised to remain nonpartisan.

In Metro Manila, National Capital Region Command chief Ben Dolorfino sent troops to secure power distribution facilities in Diliman and Araneta Center, both in Quezon City.

The use of military troops to secure elections, however, remained controversial.

Last week, a group of retired military and police officers said they had uncovered a supposed plan by the Arroyo administration to cheat—mostly in Mindanao. The group alleged that the regions identified for fraud operations were Central Visayas, Davao, Caraga and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, where more than 14.7 million voters are registered. *With Christine O. Avendaño*

Abalos would take 'Hello, Ben' call from GMA

By Nikko Dizon

"HELLO...BEN?"

Should Benjamin Abalos Sr. get this call from President Macapagal-Arroyo today, he said he would take it.

But so as not to have a repeat of the "Hello, Garci" scandal, the chair of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) said yesterday he would log all calls he gets from the President, government officials and candidates beginning today until the election period is over.

"Yes, I can answer a call from her. I don't think that would be bad," Abalos told reporters in Filipino.

"I'll just log all those calls," he added hastily.

"Hello...Garci" is the now well-known opening line of a wire-tapped telephone conversation between the President and a former Comelec commissioner believed to be Virgilio Garcillano.

The President had publicly apologized for making the "inappropriate" call but denied that the conversation had anything to do with vote-rigging. Nonetheless, the leaked tape sparked Ms Arroyo's worst political crisis—huge public protests, a split in the Cabinet and two impeachment attempts against her.

Garcillano, who campaigns by the nickname "Garci," is now a congressional candidate in Bukidnon.

Abalos said there was nothing wrong with candidates, government officials and even the President calling up Comelec officials if it would be to relay concerns of irregularities during the elections.

He said he would leave it to the "sound judgment" of the five other election commissioners to answer calls from those with a stake in the election.

At least one Comelec commissioner has categorically said he would not hesitate to pick up the phone if Garcillano himself called him up.

"Why not?", Commissioner Resurreccion Borra replied in a press conference in March when asked if he would take the call.

"He is an individual. Now that he is a politician, he is a client of the Comelec. If he calls, we will answer him, just like anybody else," Borra had said.

An advisory forum on electoral reform recently suggested that Comelec officials refrain from entertaining calls from candidates, or should at least keep a log of all such calls to prevent a repeat of the "Hello Garci" scandal.

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6 Degrees of Celebrity Beauty Secrets

The truth is, no one's perfect. And that includes those picture-perfect stars on TV and in magazines. While some of them seem to have skin and faces that defy time, it's most probably either a) a camera trick, b) really good make-up, or c) some hi-tech skin technology. Here's the dish on 6 featured celebs and what we envy about them (plus the truth behind what they really did to look and stay flawless).

Cherie Gil's poreless face. Newsflash people, it ISN'T a facelift. Cherie, a woman known for her high standards, always chooses the best and latest innovations in nearly everything. Especially her skincare. She prefers **Fraxel**, a highly advanced way of removing skin imperfections like wrinkles, dark spots and other signs of aging. It works like retouching photos in the computer, using an "editing wand" that brushes away the skin's flaws. Cherie first heard about Fraxel in the States, where it was reportedly making waves.

Cristina Romualdez's flawless face. Some make-up artists claim she looks just as radiant even pre-foundation. (And guess what. She does.) What she swears by? **IPL** (Intense Pulsed Light). It's a painless treatment that uses a broad spectrum of light that easily removes freckles, dark spots and other blemishes you'd usually hide with concealer. IPL also gives the face that fresh, "just washed" look. It gets people guessing if Cristina has make-up on or not when she's seen in public, because of such minimal difference. Now we know why.

Amanda Griffin's perfect underarms. Hairless, smooth, without even a miniscule dark spot! A certain photographer even claimed, "I dont need to PhotoShop them," after taking a picture of her baring her underarms. Don't hate her for being so blessed. She had a little help from **LaserLight** permanent hair removal. The virtually painless method promises not only permanent freedom from hair growth, but also smoother and whiter underarms.

Ana Roces' porcelain skin. With an innocent, doll-like face and skin as smooth as a baby's, who'd believe Ana's already in her 30's?! Yes, it *partly* is in the genes, but even genes can't keep the face from aging. (Heinous UV rays and clogging make-up are major culprits.) Reportedly low-maintenance, Ana's favorite indulgence is the **Diamond Peel**. The non-surgical procedure that removes dead skin cells and surface dirt keeps her from going overboard with a gazillion creams and products.

Carmi Martin's ageless skin. How young is Carmi Martin anyway? She says she's 43, but no one knows for sure, 'cause she looks almost as young as she was 2 decades ago! She swears she hasn't been under the knife, and that is certified true. As someone who'd rather not go through the trauma of plastic surgery, she opts for the ultra-safe **ReFirme** laser treatment instead. It's a safe, 45-minute procedure that removes wrinkles, fine lines, sags and dull skin. With no downtime, it's a convenient fix-me-up before any special event or public appearance (famous or otherwise).

Amina Aranaz-Alunan's glowing complexion. Before you think it's just the "glow of pregnancy," Amina's skin has always looked healthy before, during and after giving birth. One possible reason? It might be the **Repêchage 4-Layer Facial**, which is possibly the facial of all facials. With such an extensive process, it's probably the most advanced facial procedure of its kind. (Its ingredients are imported all the way from New York, making it a signature facial from the place that exclusively offers it.)

Rumor has it all these celebs are frequently seen at different branches of Facial Care Centre, where they get all their state-of-the-art treatments. (Some of those treatments reportedly aren't available in other skincare centers.) Interesting... Might be a good time to book an appointment. (Facial Care's number is 892-7546.) ADVT

Why I'm voting for Kapatiran

From page A1

ure in the survey ratings.

If in today's elections our people do vote according to conscience, there is some chance for marginal parties like Kapatiran. A strong showing by its candidates will send a strong signal that there are people of conscience out there who can be a healing force in our diseased politics.

This possibility is like a drop of rain in a long summer season of drought and political discontent. This election has seen the collapse of an already fragmented party system into free-floating groupings of vested interests.

The hope that it would be a sort of referendum on the legitimacy of the Arroyo administration has been dashed by the lack of clarity and coherence in the stance of major parties on issues needing closure.

There is great doubt that the will of the people will truly surface, mainly because of widespread fear of fraud in the actual vote count, presided over as it is by a Commission on Elections tainted by the "Garci" scandal and headed by a chairman with proven ethical pliability.

Yet at the same time, quite softly and without much fanfare, an alternative that may turn out to be historic has presented itself.

KAPATIRAN senatorial candidates (from left) Martin Bautista, Zosimo Paredes and Adrian Sison walk in Divisoria. REM ZAMORA

Kapatiran, the party which alone has a clear platform, has managed to resonate among those seeking a way out of the morass of our morally greasy politics. One wonders why savvy politicians with some remaining shreds of idealism had stayed away from it. What would it be like if the Kapatiran is taken a little more seriously as something more than a quixotic blip on the radar screen of politicians and voters alike?

Preference for personality

A long lament over the state of our politics is this pronounced preference for personality rather than platform. Kapatiran stands for a politics of principle, and because of this it has dared to put up candidates that are not known and have no name recall, but are competent and have the character to match their brains and the published aims of the party.

Zosimo Paredes, Adrian Sison and Martin Bautista will not be noticed if they walk down the corridors of a mall or a grocery store. They are known only to colleagues and friends who witness their daily walk of faithfulness in the big and small things they are called to be responsible for.

In this they are similar to the many faceless men and women in this country who have what it takes to rule this country well, but remain in the margins because they do not push themselves forward.

But then these days these Kapatiran candidates have taken a step that is distinctly out of character with the rest of this country's talent pool.

Unlike those who migrate or are content to sit on the sidelines, these men have been prepared to be thrust into the mess of politics and leave their careers, their comfort zones and quiet pursuits to obey a call to "put God at the center of politics." Precisely because they are not your garden variety politicians, it is not without sacrifice that they put themselves forward in the service of the larger good.

Politics of virtue

The possible effect of a "politics of virtue" is not to be scoffed at in a time when our people are utterly sick of our political elite, perceived to be mostly scoundrels merely taking turns in seizing power.

The huge crowds that surfaced in the rallies of Eddie Villanueva, the religious leader-turned-presidential aspirant in the election of 2004, is sign enough of a latent electoral power that could be summoned given a cause of some moral credibility.

The fact that this crusade for "moral governance" frittered away quite quickly in the aftermath of the elections is also an indication that our people are discerning enough to decisively withdraw support and turn away disenchanted once they smell the faintest whiff of moral rot.

Research shows that our people gravitate toward leaders who combine in themselves genuine charisma and moral authority. Leaders of millenarian movements, like Hermano Pule, are of this type; there is a great deal of longing in the culture of men and women who will lead with spiritual integrity.

It is not an accident that the brunt of resistance against Spanish and American colonialism had been waged by leaders of such quasi-religious movements. We should not be surprised that our religious leaders today have an almost medieval power over their flock, and tend to have more credibility than politicians. It also explains the very low trust level accorded those who currently occupy seats of power and by past choices or "lapse in judgment" have soiled themselves.

Fusing political, spiritual goals

As in our wars of independence, there is a long tradition of fusing the political and spiritual in our national affairs. The Kapatiran is a contemporary example of this impulse.

Far from conjuring images of Rasputin and Cardinal Richelieu from the muddled history of Church-State relations in the West, the Kapatiran is a national political party, not of clerics but of lay people seeking to make a difference in this country from their faith perspectives.

Having learned from failed socialist experiments that love of neighbor without love of God ends in killing fields, they believe that all change begins from the inside, even as they also know that injustice can be entrenched in structures and need confronting systematically.

I have no illusions that the Kapatiran candidates will make it. It will take a major miracle for any of them to land in the top 12. But then, I am not voting for success; I am voting for change. And who knows? If the 77 percent who said they will vote according to conscience really did so, they may stand a chance. So remember: Paredes, Sison, Bautista. Para Sa Bayan ito.

(The author is founding director and current president-chief executive officer of the Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture formed in 1978 in response to authoritarianism in the Philippines. It has since served as a catalyst in moving Church communities toward deeper reflection on the Gospel and sociocultural issues.)

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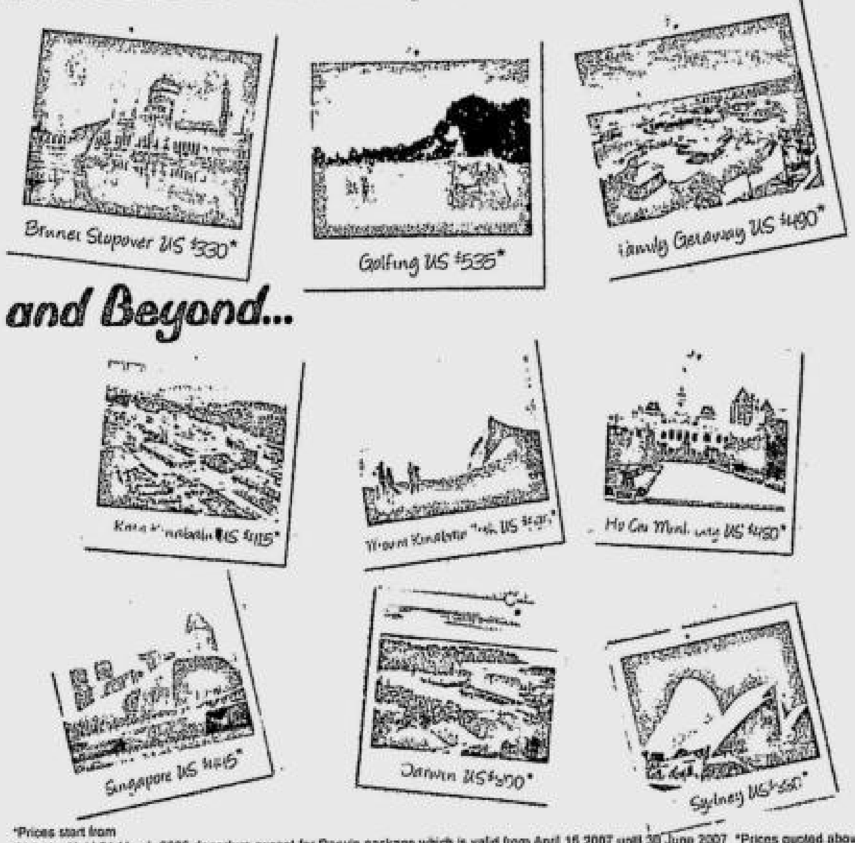

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ROYAL BRUNEI

Corrections

IN THE MAY 11 issue, a front-page article — "17 groups poised to win" — misstated that Rosalinda Dacanay is the third nominee of the party-list group Agricultural Sectoral Alliance of the Philippines Inc. (Agap). Dacanay is a nominee of another party-list group, Aging Pinoy. Agap's third nominee is Rico Geron.

* * *

IN THE MAY 12 issue, an Across the Nation story on Page A19 — "Raid yields ballots, poll ink" — erroneously described Rep. Uliran Joaquin as "a former Laguna Lake Development Authority official who was relieved on graft charges." It is Joaquin's rival, Calixto Cataquiz, who is a former LLDA official.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, May 14, 2007
Matthias, Apostle
1st Reading: Acts 1:15-17, 20-26
Gospel: John 15:9-17

Jesus said to his disciples, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; remain in my love. You will remain in my love if you keep my commandments, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

"I have told you all this, that my own joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this, to give one's life for one's friends; and you are my friends if you do what I command you.

"I shall not call you servants any more, because servants do not know what their master is about. Instead I have called you friends, since I have made known to you everything I learned from my Father.

"You did not choose me; it was I who chose you and sent you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. And everything you ask the Father in my name, he will give you.

"This is my command, that you love one another."

Commentary

When the apostles number only eleven they choose another who is a witness to the resurrection. They pray and draw lots between two candidates, and Matthias is chosen to replace Judas. He completes the number twelve, though we know nothing else of him. Perhaps it is the process that is most instructive and crucial: It is God who reads the hearts of humans and makes known who is to be a leader. Who and how should our leaders be nominated? We should pray and choose by lot—what a difference there would be in who was chosen and how the Church moved in the world.

Again Jesus keeps telling us that everything is love—as the Father has loved him, he loves us! And if we obey his word/commands we will live in that love, now and forever and we will know the joy of Jesus who obeys. We are called to love unto death, call everyone beloved, treat all as friends because that is the love we have known from God.

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Angara calls for full power

LET THERE BE LIGHT TODAY.

Team Unity senatorial candidate Edgardo Angara called on all electricity distributors to ensure there would be a sufficient supply of power across the country today, election day, to safeguard the electoral process.

Angara said on Friday that a no-brownout election would nurture the symbolism that "democracy is the triumph of light over darkness."

"There should be 81 points of light shining brightly on May 14," he said, referring to the 81 provinces in the country.

Angara, a reelectionist, said power distributors should coordinate with power generators to ensure adequate power up to the end of the counting and tabulation period.

He said excuses would be unacceptable because of the importance of conducting a clean election and conveying the message that the polls were fair, free and transparent.

Angara said there had been a clear attempt to pre-judge the election as being less than fair, adding that this "tainted environment" should allow no room for power outages on this special occasion.

"We in Team Unity will win but we will win fair and square. We are organized down to the grass roots, our vote delivery system is in place, we did real campaigning instead of relying on perceived sympathy," he said.

Angara said that in his region in Central Luzon alone, the seven provinces had no gubernatorial candidate allied with the Genuine Opposition, which he said was "a definitive setback."

He continued: "The GO has no candidates in 80 percent of the congressional and mayoral races. The situation in Central Luzon is very much the same in most regions of the country, except perhaps Metro Manila."

Angara likewise said TU was not fazed by the surveys which had shown a preference for the GO candidates.

"Grass-roots support for the TU has been enthusiastic, warm and overwhelming," he said.

Cynthia D. Balana

New Comelec counting, canvassing rules in effect

By Jerome Aning

WHAT'S NEW IN TODAY'S ELECTION proceedings?

The Commission on Elections yesterday reminded candidates, voters and poll officials yesterday that several provisions of Republic Act No. 9369, or the Automated Election System Act of 2007, pertaining to the counting and canvassing of votes would take effect today.

"Even if Comelec opted not to enforce the new law's major provisions on poll automation due to lack of material time, the commissioners deemed it feasible to adopt its other provisions to update our election rules and make them more efficient," Comelec spokesperson James Arthur Jimenez told the INQUIRER.

Revised general instructions

Many provisions of RA 9369 regarding election proceedings are contained in Comelec Resolution Nos. 7740, 7797, 7815 and 7859, which are the revised general instructions for boards of election inspectors (BEIs) and boards of canvassers (BOCs) for both local and overseas voting.

It will be recalled that RA 9369 was partly passed by Congress to ensure greater transparency and speed in conducting the elections following allegations of fraud during the 2004 presidential polls.

One important rule that voters and poll watchers should watch our for, according to Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr., is the requirement that the second copy of the election return (ER) be posted on a wall of the polling places.

After the BEI chair announces the vote tally for a precinct, the poll clerk shall post the ER copy on a wall within the polling place or counting center. This must be done in the presence of other BEI members, poll watchers and those present in the precinct.

Open for public viewing

According to Abalos, the posted ER copy shall be open for public viewing at any time of the day for 48 hours following its posting. Within that period, any person may view, copy or take pictures of the ER.

At the end of 48 hours, the BEI chair shall collect the ER, keep it and produce it for image or data capturing as may be requested by any voter or ordered by a competent authority.

During the canvassing, the BOC chair and clerk shall do the same for the certificates of canvass (COCs), which are consolidated tallies of ERs.

ABALOS

In an earlier interview, Abalos said he would have wanted to implement another RA 9369 procedure which requires that ERs being canvassed by the BOC be projected on a wall of the canvassing center so the public could see the ERs while they are being read.

However, lack of time and money prevented the Comelec from acquiring opaque projectors for the hundreds of canvassing centers throughout the country, Abalos said.

Within 'close view'

In another new regulation, BEIs are now prohibited from rearranging the physical setup of the precincts in preparation for the counting, unless poll watchers and public observers are present. At all times, according to Comelec, the ballot boxes and all election documents and paraphernalia shall be within the "close view" of the watchers and the public.

To make counting uniform in all precincts, the poll body said that during the tally, the BEI chair shall first read the names of the candidates for senator, then the party-list group, followed by the district representative, and finally the local candidates from governor down to city or municipal councilors.

Abalos recalled that in previous elections, there were instances when some BEIs read the names of the candidates selectively or in random order, resulting in counting mistakes and allegations of cheating.

Mandatory per diem

Meanwhile, the transfer of the counting to another public building within the same municipality or city is still allowed but only in cases of "imminent danger of widespread violence or similar causes of comparable magnitude."

This time, though, the transfer must be approved unanimously by the BEI with the written endorsement of all poll watchers.

However, the new venue must not be located within the perimeter or inside a camp, office or any facility of the military, police, jail authority or any law enforcement agency.

With the added duties and responsibilities of poll watchers, the Comelec has also adopted RA 9369's provision that poll watchers be given mandatory per diem of P400, to be paid by the political parties that hired them.

'Dagdag-bawas'

To prevent cheating, the Comelec adopted the stiffer penalties imposed by RA 9369 on large-scale tampering of election results, including dagdag-bawas (vote-padding and -shaving).

RA 9369 introduced a new election offense known as electoral sabotage which is punishable by life imprisonment.

Tampering, refusal to correct results and *dagdag-bawas* would be treated as electoral sabotage when the fraud resulted in the proclamation of the actual loser as the winner of a national elective post, Jimenez said.

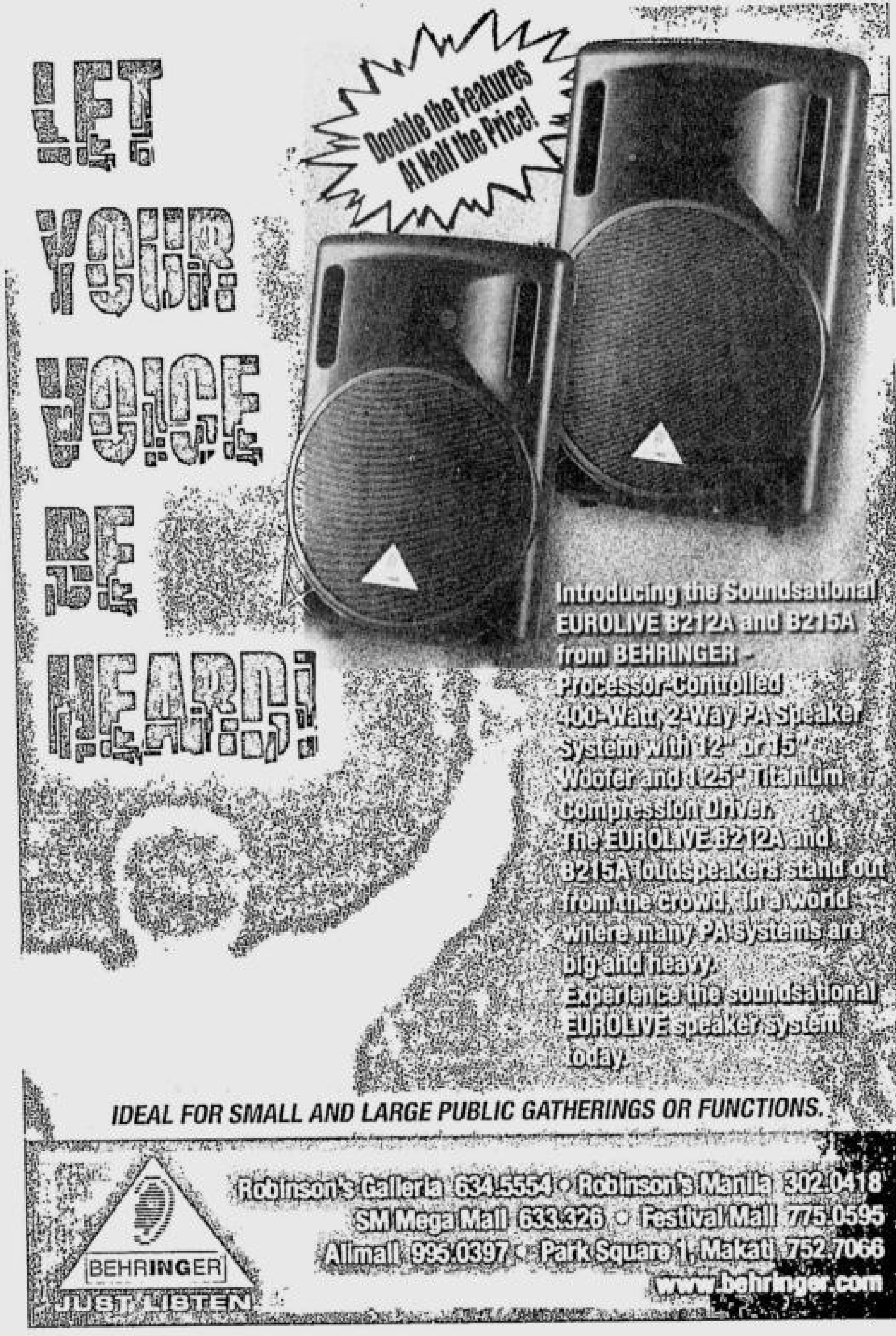
The alteration of the correct results in a single document or transposition of garnered votes from one election document, both cases involving more than 5,000 votes, and all other forms of tampering and alterations involving 10,000 votes will also be considered electoral sabotage, he said.

Special voting booths

Other new regulations not provided for under RA 9369 have been incorporated in the general instructions. These include Comelec Minute Resolution No. 07-0406 dated March 6, which stemmed from Jimenez's concern about elderly and disabled voters.

The resolution requires local election officials to coordinate with school or building administrators to see to it that special voting booths are set up on the ground floor of polling centers to provide easy access to physically disabled and elderly voters.

Another was MR 07-0930, passed on May 2, which Abalos said would speed up the canvassing of results at the local level. The Comelec has now allowed BOCs to form canvassing committees to canvass every 100 ERs, instead of 200 under the old rules.



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Honasan seeks reversal of coup d'etat charges

By Leila B. Salaverria

WHILE SLUGGING IT OUT FOR A SENATE seat, former Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan has continued with his legal battle questioning the Department of Justice's resolution finding him liable for coup d'etat for his alleged involvement in the failed July 2003 Oakwood mutiny.

In a petition filed last week through his lawyer, Daniel Gutierrez, Honasan asked Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to reverse the April 18, 2007, resolution of the DOJ upholding its 2005 finding that he was involved in the Oakwood siege.

The resolution was the basis for the DOJ's filing of an amended information charging Honasan as a leader of the Oakwood mutiny, wherein junior military officers withdrew their support from the government and the military chain of command.

The resolution was issued following a reinvestigation of the coup d'etat case.

Honasan sought the reinvestigation after his arrest last year, saying he was not given a chance to submit a counteraffidavit. The Makati Regional Trial Court granted his request and directed the DOJ to conduct the reinvestigation.

In his petition, Honasan said there was no evidence to link him to the Oakwood siege and there was no coup attempt in the first place.

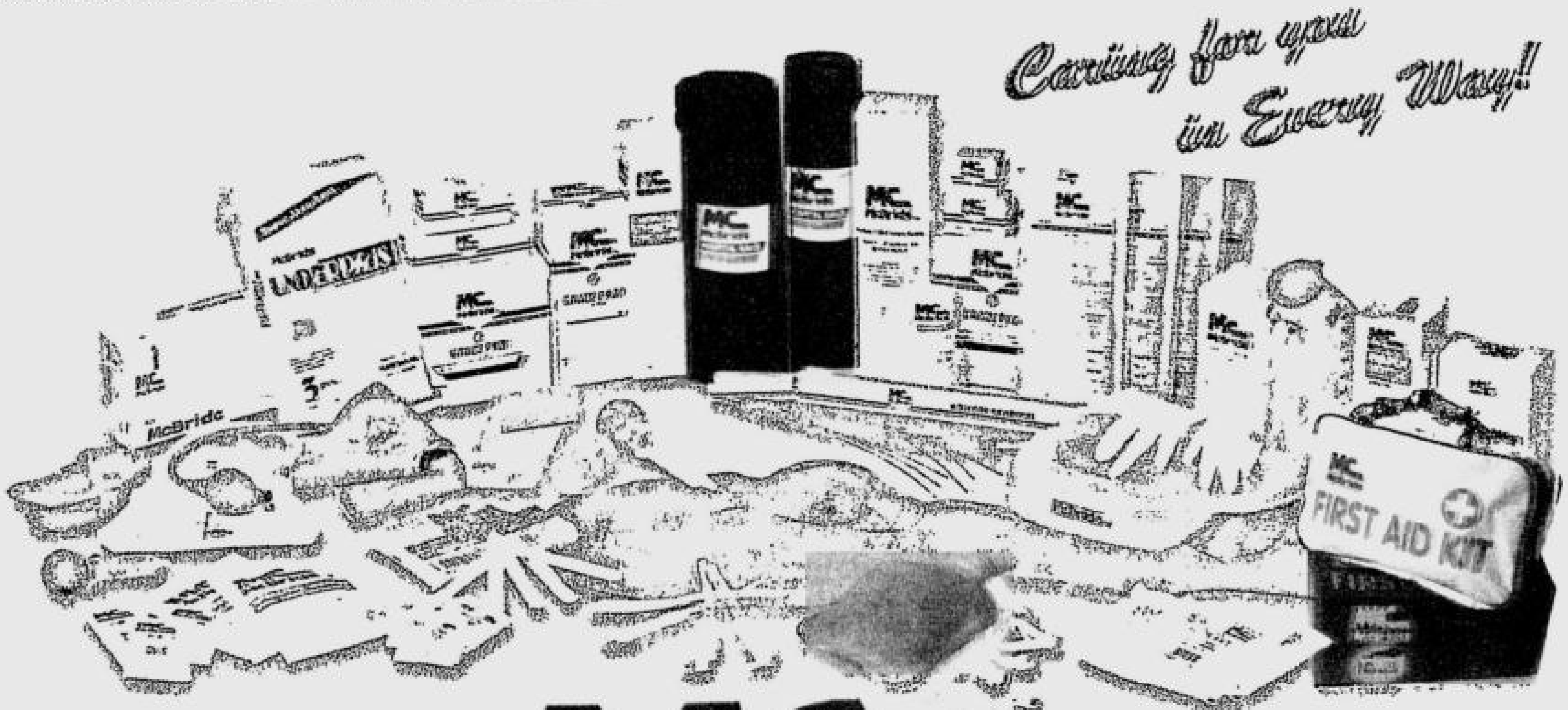
He said the Oakwood mutiny could not be considered a coup attempt as defined in the Revised Penal Code because the Oakwood serviced apartments and the facilities of the nearby Ayala Center were neither duly constituted government authorities nor military camps, communication networks or public utilities.

"Seizing Oakwood Premier Hotel is not attacking a duly constituted government authority. Declaring a withdrawal of support from the government and the AFP chain of command is not attacking any duly constituted government authorities much less does it constitute attacking by violence, intimidation, threat, strategy or stealth duly constituted government authorities," he said.

Honasan said he was being persecuted for his National Recovery Program, which contains policy propositions and summaries of his Senate bills.

The Philippine National Police had alleged that Honasan discussed the NRP during a meeting with military officers and was quoted as advocating an armed struggle and the use of force to achieve the program's objectives.

But Honasan denied ever meeting with anybody to discuss a mutiny, coup d'etat or rebellion or ever advocating violence to achieve the NRP's objectives.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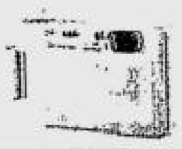
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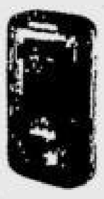
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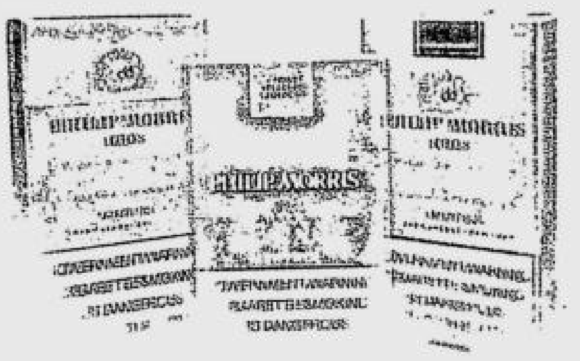
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Voters prefer Filipino election observers, SWS survey shows

MOST OF THE VOTERS WHO were aware of election observers for today's polls prefer that the observers be Filipino, while a fourth prefer that they be both Filipino and foreign, according to a Social Weather Stations survey conducted last month.

One in every five Filipino voters (21 percent) have "heard or read of May 2007 election observers," the SWS survey conducted from April 14 to 17 showed. Of this number, 67 percent preferred Filipino observers, 24 percent preferred both Filipino and foreign observers, while 8 percent preferred foreign observers.

Awareness about election observers was higher in Mindanao (27 percent), among members of classes ABC (30 percent) and among college graduates (28 percent).

Twenty-one percent in the Visayas, 17 percent in Metro Manila and 18 percent in the rest of Luzon have also heard or read of election observers in today's polls, as did 21 percent in class D and 17 percent in class E.

Level of education

The survey also found that knowledge about election observers in this year's midterm elections declined with level of schooling: Only a fifth (21 percent) of high school graduates, 19 percent of elementary graduates and 16 percent of those who did not finish elementary school have either heard or read about their presence in this election.

The Commission on Elections has accredited over 200 foreign election observers from 12 countries and seven international organizations for today's election. The most number of observers came from the United States Embassy. The Japanese, British, Canadian and New Zealand embassies have also sent their observers.

The Comelec also issued accreditations to the embassies of Australia, Singapore, Sweden, Finland, Germany, France and Spain, while the international organizations also accredited included The Asia Foundation, ACF Compact, the European Commission, Friedrich Naumann, USAID Philippines, National Democratic Institute and the International Foundation for Election Systems.

Outside precincts

Today, foreign observers can observe the conduct of the elections in any locality. They can interview voters, political leaders and other individuals outside the polling places, and document the elections as long as it would not be done inside polling areas during voting hours, according to Comelec. The observers are also allowed to observe the canvassing after election day.

They are prohibited, however, from extending aid, direct or indirect, to any candidate or political party; taking part in or influencing the election in any manner; entering any polling place during voting hours, and entering places reserved for voters or for the Board of Election Inspectors or to mingle and talk with voters inside the polling place. Violation may mean imprisonment from one to six years and deportation after serving the prison term.

Those who preferred Filipino observers were mostly in the rest of Luzon (71 percent), in classes ABC (73 percent) and only had some elementary schooling (77 percent).

Added to confidence

"Preference for Filipino election observers declines with level of schooling," SWS said in a statement released on Saturday. Seventy percent among elementary graduates, 64 percent among high school graduates and 60 percent among college graduates preferred Filipino observers, according to the survey.

The survey also showed that most voters who were aware of independent observers in the 2004 elections said it added "much or somewhat much" to their "confidence in the honesty of the elections."

Of the 31 percent who had "personally seen independent observers" in the last elections, two-thirds said the observers' presence added to the respondent's confidence that the past election was "clean and honest" while the other third said it added "little or nothing."

Awareness higher

Awareness of election observers in 2004 was higher among the middle-to-upper classes (48 percent) and college graduates (43 percent).

"The effect of the election observers on confidence is stronger among the better-off classes," SWS said, adding that higher educational attainment meant "greater confidence" that the 2004 elections were "honest."

Thirty-three percent in the rest of Luzon and in Mindanao, 29 percent in Metro Manila and 25 percent in the Visayas saw independent observers in 2004, while 32 percent in class D and 25 percent in class E were also aware of them. Only a third (33 percent) of high school graduates and a fourth (25 percent) of those who only attended some elementary or graduated from elementary knew about their presence in 2004.

Vote-buying

Despite the boost of confidence brought about by the presence of election observers, more than half of Filipino voters still expect vote-buying to "definitely or probably happen" in their areas when they were surveyed weeks before election day.

The results of the May 2-4 SWS survey on expected election irregularities were lower, however, than in the previous April round. The percentage of those expecting vote-buying went down 12 percentage points, from 69 percent in April to 57 percent in May.

The percentage of those expecting other irregularities also went down: "Dagdag-bawas" (from 53 percent in April to 45 percent), flying voters (from 46 percent to 41 percent) and voter harassment (from 39 percent to 30 percent). *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

Romualdez supporter nabbed

TACLOBAN CITY—A supporter of city mayoral candidate Alfred Romualdez was arrested Friday night by police operatives after he was caught handing over a bundle of money allegedly to buy votes.

SPO2 Edgar Octaviano, officer-on-case of the Leyte provincial police, identified the suspect as Jarby Martinez, 25, said to be a casual employee of the city government.

Octaviano said Martinez was arrested in Barangay 62-A (Kalipayan) at around 8 p.m. while handing over a plastic bag containing 200 white envelopes to a "contact" in the village.

Each envelope contained P200 and a sample ballot of Romualdez, a nephew of former First Lady Imelda Marcos, and of his wife, Cristina, who is running for city councilor.

Martinez is now detained at the Leyte provincial command in Barangay San Jose, this city.

Romualdez, who is running under Lakas-CMD, declined to comment but someone in his camp said he had nothing to do with the alleged vote-buying. *Joey A. Gabieta and Cynthia B. Pease, Inquirer Visayas*

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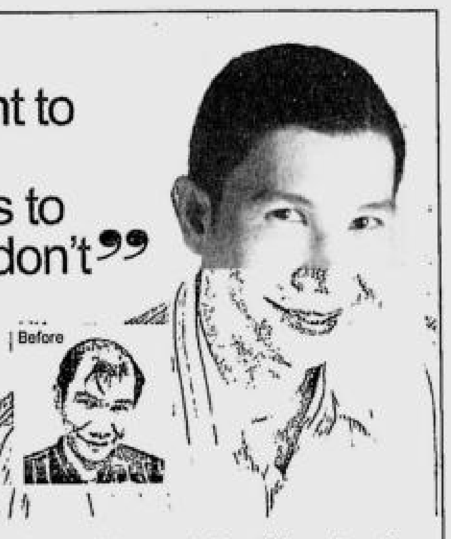

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The Health Unit of the Ateneo Graduate School of Business, Ateneo de Manila University has been granted funding for LEADERSHIP INNOVATIONS IN POPULATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation (USA). The Leadership Innovations in Population Resource Management is a comprehensive, collaborative, interdisciplinary, and problem-oriented leadership program on population resource management that will facilitate and advance the generation, sharing and application of knowledge on population dynamics in the Philippines. It will take a comprehensive approach to population, linking population policies and programs to poverty alleviation. It is expected to contribute to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially the goals on child and maternal health and HIV/AIDS, universal access to reproductive health, particularly those that foster gender equality and shared responsibility among men and women in reproductive health concerns.

The LEADERSHIP INNOVATIONS IN POPULATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT provides support for five (5) fellowships towards a degree in Master in Business Administration in Health, with emphasis on Strategic Population Resource Management. The emphasis will include courses on demography and biostatistics, reproductive biology, public discourse on population and development, health and communication and education as well as a seminar series on critical issues in population leadership and management. Fellows will be assigned faculty advisers who will oversee the individual fellow's progress and guide his/her final independent graduate paper on population concerns.

The MBA/Health with emphasis on *Strategic Population Resource Management* program will run for two and half years. The fellowship program will commence on July14, 2007. Fellows will be awarded full tuition scholarships and book and transportation allowance for the duration of the program.

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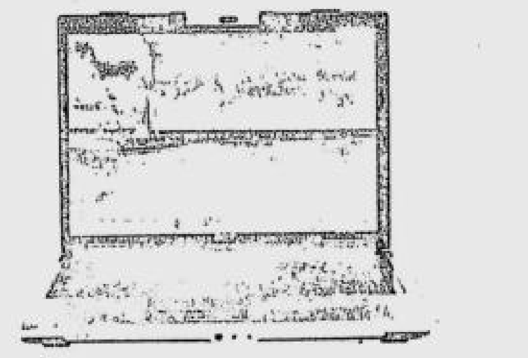

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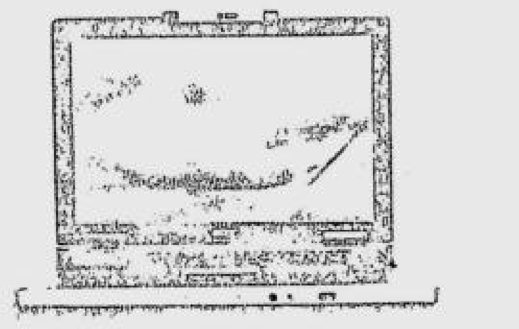

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Pa's unburied remains give bet strength

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

SAN CARLOS CITY—AS HE FACES HIS POLITICAL fate today, acting Mayor Julier Resuello draws strength from looking at the remains of his father, slain Mayor Julian Resuello.

"Whenever I look at his face, I grow stronger. I feel the need to carry on the fight, to continue to lead the city, to continue the programs and projects he had started for San Carlos and the people," said Julier, who is running for mayor of this city.

"We are still waiting for justice," he said.

The elder Resuello, whose term was to end this year, was seeking the vice mayoral post when he was shot dead while greeting supporters during a local beauty pageant at the city proper on April 28.

Still mourning

Another son, Joseres, will take his place in the vice mayoral race.

The Resuellos and their supporters are still mourning the mayor's death. His burial is set for May 20 or almost three weeks after he was killed.

Police have arrested a suspect in the slaying. Another suspect is still at large.

Julier said the family decided to bury their father after the elections because they were busy with the campaign and were still waiting for the arrival of some relatives who are based abroad.

Senior Supt. Isagani Nerez, Pangasinan police director, said the police were closely watching developments in this city where "emotions are high, especially because the body of [Resuello] is still there."

"We are on guard against any act of retaliation. But we can see that the members of the Resuello family are prudent and have left [the work to get justice] to authorities. They believe that the government will give them justice," he said.

The arraignment of suspected gunman Angelito Soriano on Friday was postponed after his lawyer and a group of lawyers from the Commission on Human Rights failed to attend the proceedings at the regional trial court here.

Senior Supt. Johnny Bacbac, city police chief, said Soriano's lawyers have asked for a reinvestigation of the case.

Positive for gunpowder

The police found Soriano in a hospital while undergoing treatment for bullet wounds in his foot and hand on May 1. Tests showed that his right hand was positive for gunpowder nitrates, indicating that he had fired a gun.

Investigators said Soriano's features were similar to a person caught in a video of the affair that Resuello was attending on the night he and his civilian security aide were killed.

In an earlier press conference, Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, Ilocos police director, said Soriano's blood samples would be compared with the bloodstains taken from the crime scene.

The police were supposed to get blood samples from Soriano on May 4 while he was detained at the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group's provincial office. Soriano's lawyer and three CHR lawyers, however, stopped the procedure.

Bataoil said the police have expanded their search to Metro Manila for another suspect identified as Cesar de Guzman.

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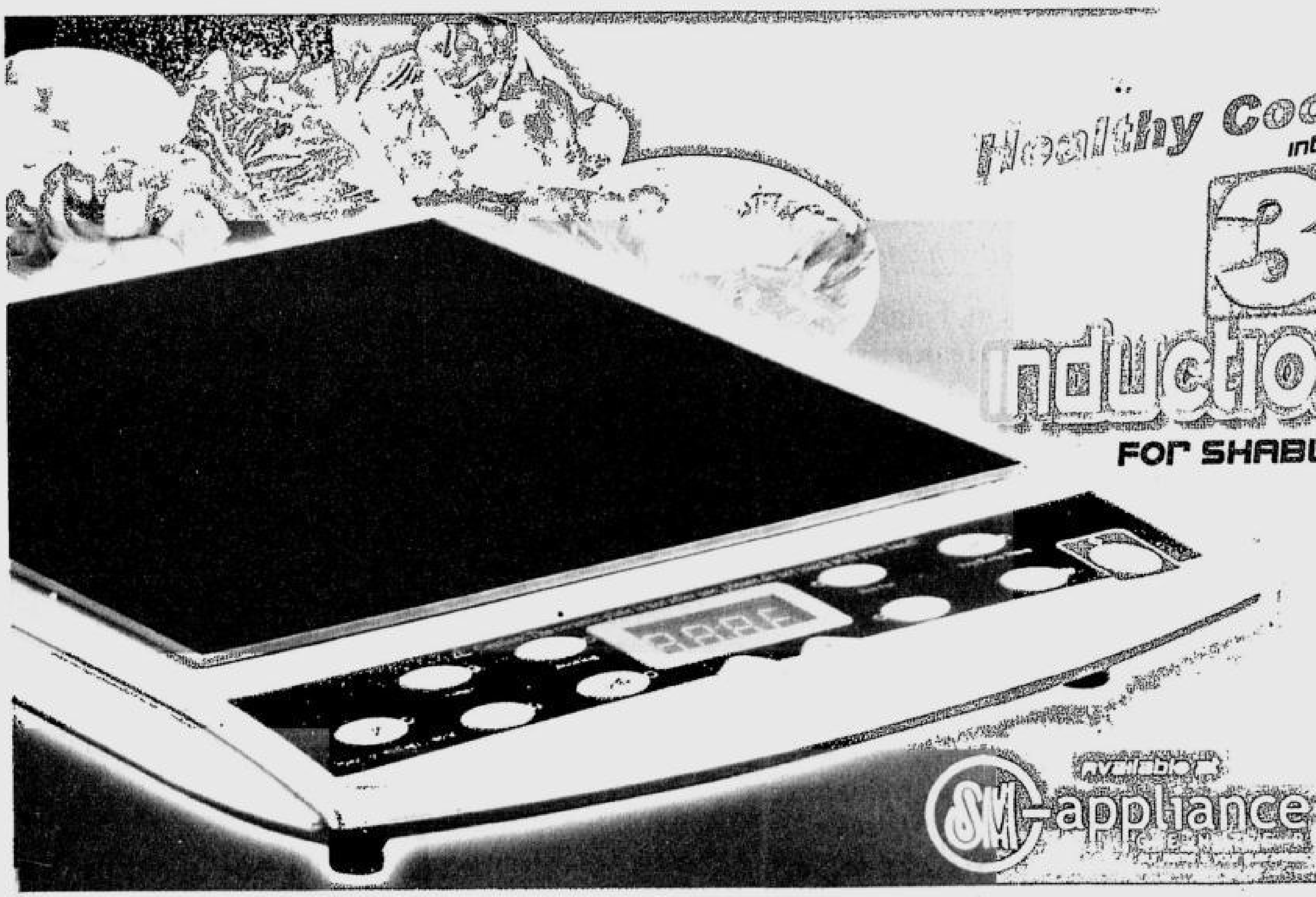

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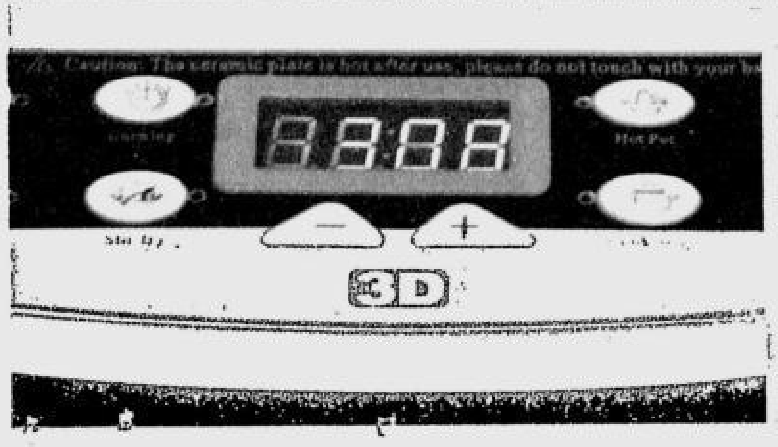

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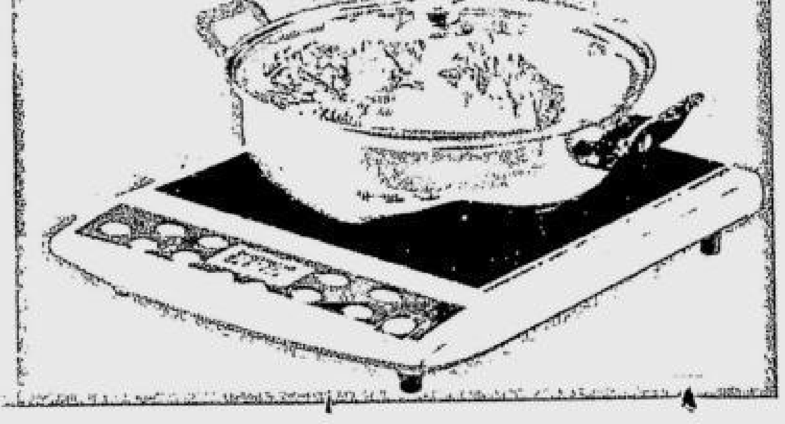

Camarines Sur race no cakewalk for 'Dato'

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

NAGA CITY—THE RACE FOR THE congressional seat in the first district of Camarines Sur ended with one camp predicting victory and the other claiming an advantage over his rival.

The camp of Diosdado "Dato" Arroyo, the younger son of President Macapagal-Arroyo, is counting on an early victory while the camp of Mayor Sabas "Abang" Mabulo of San Fernando, Camarines Sur, has declared an easy win in the congressional race.

The Arroyo camp ended its sorties with a *miting de avance* in at least three barangays, coupled with house-to-house campaigns to press as many hands as possible.

Rachel Peoro, spokesperson for Arroyo's camp, said their candidate preferred not to publicize his development assistance to the villages. Neither did he want to comment on being tagged a "carpetbagger" and a "dynast."

Peoro claimed they had on their side all the barangay captains and mayors in the 10-town first district of Camarines Sur, except for Mabulo's town.

She said district-wide groups like the Council of Religious Organizations Movement (an inter-faith group), Agriculture and Fisheries Council, Association of Disabled Persons and Association of Daycare Workers also supported Arroyo.

Arroyo would be remembered by the voters, she said, because he took time to visit many villages, sometimes bringing along free medical services.

Gov. Luis Raymund Villafuerte Jr. also helped introduce Arroyo to the towns where they held exhibition basketball games, she added.

Peoro summed up Arroyo's development initiatives in three words: Water, health and livelihood.

On the other side of the campaign trail, Cezar Belangel, a long-time friend of Mabulo's could not believe they lasted up to the homestretch.

Mabulo started with meager resources and a number of supporters from San Fernando and civil society groups.

"But with the backing of the Christian Life Community of the Philippines, a Catholic group based in the parishes, resources were donated, logistics devised and manpower continued to pour in," Belangel said.

He said Mabulo's exposure was limited to Naga City and some towns in the second district to which San Fernando is nearer than the towns in the first district like Del Gallego, Ragay, Sipocot and Cabusao.

Belangel said that during the first week of the campaign, many people in the villages asked who their candidate was although Mabulo was right in front of them.

He said that with more donations and support coming in, they were able to expand their campaign.

He claimed Mabulo's popularity continued to rise because the people found him easy to identify with and he was accessible. On the other hand, Arroyo was considered aloof and was always shielded by presidential guards.

Belangel said the considerable increase in the participation and number of supporters joining their cause had inspired them.

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Listen to the Filipino People on Family Planning and Reproductive Health

A Call to Candidates in the May 2007 Elections

Poverty is like a spreading disease that afflicts millions of Filipinos. Data show that a sole breadwinner in a five-member family is expected to find it an arduous task to bring the entire family above the poverty line if he/she only earns at most PhP 204 per day. But is fulfilling one's minimum needs enough to be able to lead a life of dignity?

Other indicators are most disturbing. The country's economic growth rate of 4.1% is too inadequate to compensate for the negative effects of the average population growth rate of 2.36%. The resulting poverty at the household level can be offset at least if there is a consistent annual economic growth rate of 8%. The arithmetic is plain, simple and alarming.

Pulse Asia's March 2007 Survey on Family Planning says that nine out of 10 Filipinos consider family planning important. Nine out of 10 Filipinos want the government to fund modern methods of family planning. The majority of Filipinos (52%) believe that a candidate's support for family planning will determine his/her electoral victory, while only 6 percent believe this would mean defeat in the polls. ***Clearly, the people want family planning and reproductive health services.***

We call on all candidates to support Population Management, Family Planning and Reproductive Health policies. The Filipino people deserve no less. Make Population and Reproductive Health issues a national agenda.

Atty. Miguel B. Varela
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Employers Confederation of the Philippines and Chairman Emeritus, Phil. Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Amb. Donald Dee
Chairman
Phil. Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Mr. Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr.
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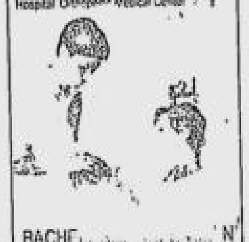

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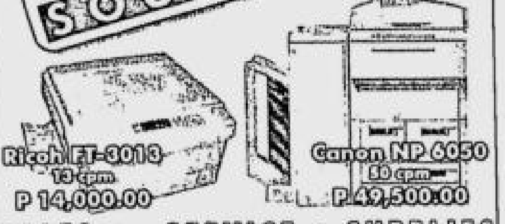
We apologize to the public for printing the wrong ad of COSMOTECH PHILIPPINES, INC. for the PANASONIC PROJECTOR SALE AD on page A21 of the Philippine Daily Inquirer's April 30, 2007 issue. The price should be Php36,990.00 instead of Php39,990.00 that we have published.



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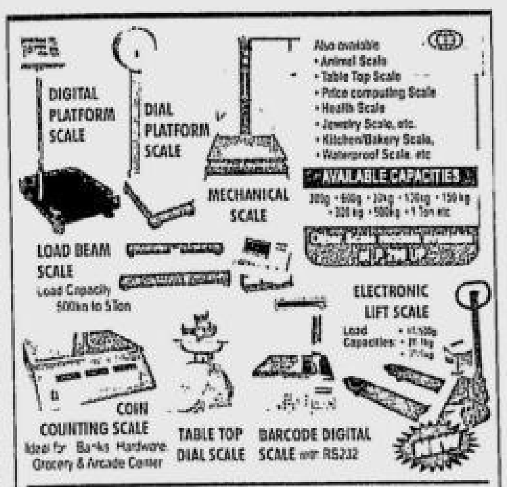

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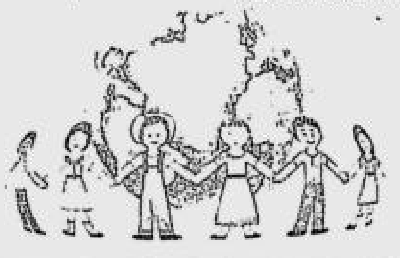

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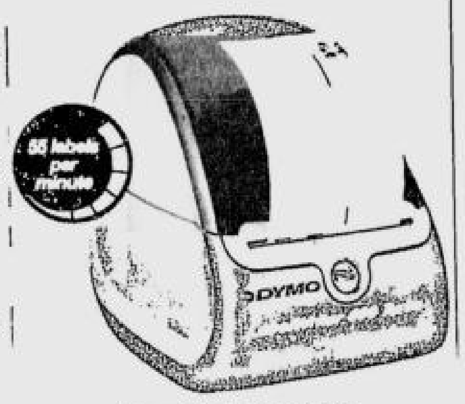

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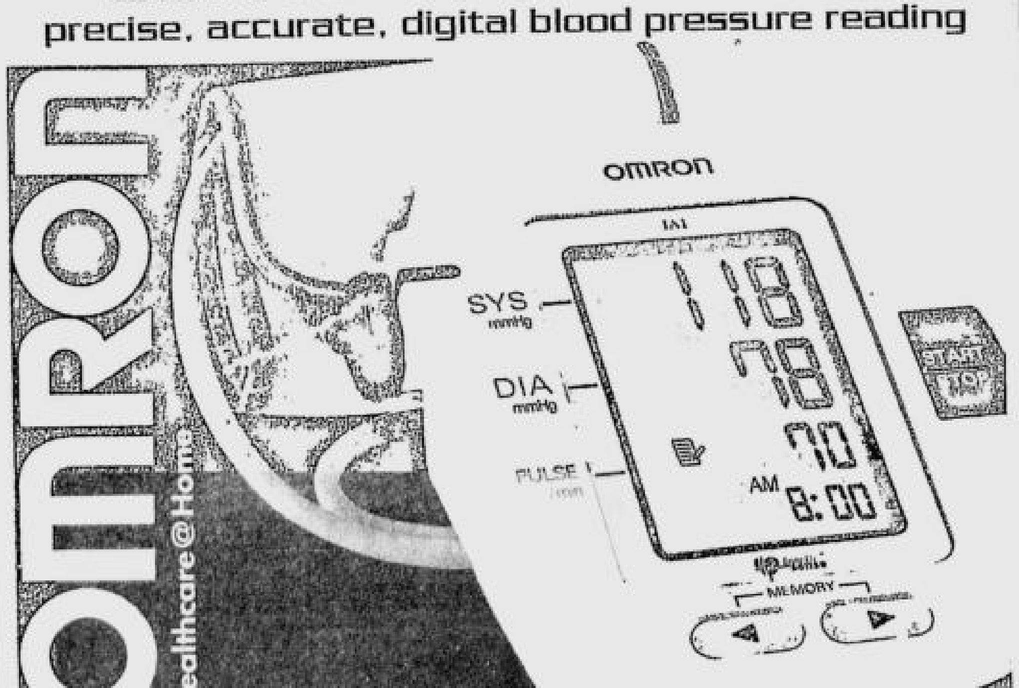

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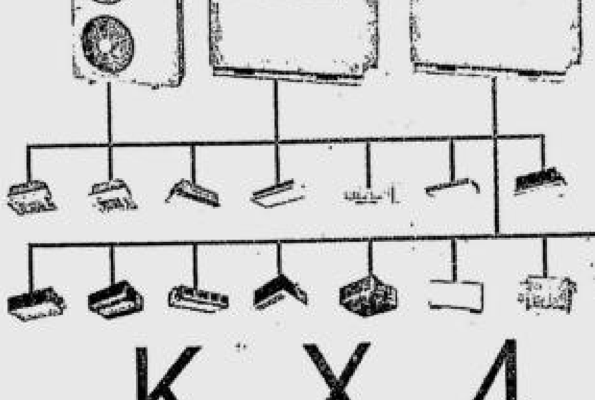

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Journalists to pursue suit vs Mike

By DJ Yap

THE MEDIA WON'T RETURN THE FAVOR.

While President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, has decided to drop all the libel cases he filed against several media personalities, other journalists and media entities are bent on pursuing the P12.5-million class action suit against him.

"We will pursue the case," said lawyer Harry Roque, who represents the complainants—some 36 individual journalists and three media organizations—in the damage suit against the President's husband.

"The damage has been done. The media have already felt the chilling effect. The media have felt the intimidation," Roque told the INQUIRER on Friday.

After surviving high-risk heart surgery, Arroyo announced he was withdrawing all the libel cases he had filed against more than 40 members of the press over the past several months.

No public apology

But Roque said Arroyo "never admitted to doing anything wrong. He never apologized. If he issues a public apology to the journalists, then we may reconsider."

"We want this case to serve by way of example to others not to abuse libel laws," he added.

Roque said, however, that the complainants would meet again after the May 17 hearing to determine their next course of action, so it was still possible they would withdraw the case.

In his libel complaints, Arroyo had maintained that he should be treated like a private citizen, since he did not hold a public office. He also said filing libel cases was his right.

Social experiment

The class suit, which the journalists called a "social experiment," accused Arroyo of abusing his right to file libel complaints and, in effect, curtail press freedom.

The hearing on the case, pending before Judge Zenaida Galapate-Laguilles of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 143, will resume on May 17, during which Arroyo is expected to defend himself against the charges.

On April 12, Laguilles suspended the proceedings after Arroyo's lawyer, Ruy Alberto Rondain, said they would elevate the case to the Court of Appeals.

Rondain questioned Laguilles' order admitting amendments made by the complainants to their original affidavit.

Pay higher fees

The changes included the omission of the word "each" from the amount of damages sought, which would have required the complainants to pay much higher docket fees.

Other amendments included errors in the names and addresses of the plaintiffs.

The journalists said the word "each" was just a clerical error.

Arroyo, however, questioned the supposed error: "It is difficult to believe that plaintiffs, all seasoned journalists who claimed they read the complaint before verifying it, would miss that supposed typo," he said.

CIO TAN DAY I
MAY 2

HONORED IN SAN FRANCISCO San Francisco has proclaimed May 11 Dr. Lucio Tan Day in the Bay Area. San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom (right) hands over to Tan the city proclamation making May 11 of each year a special day in honor of the Chinese-Filipino business tycoon. A first for a nonresident civilian, the tribute cited Tan for his socioeconomic contributions to San Francisco. At left is Tan's wife Carmen.

PDI man sees threat in cop's joke

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—A SENIOR POLICE OFficial cracked a joke which INQUIRER correspondent Marlon Ramos felt was a threat directed at him.

So concerned was Ramos for his safety, he wrote a letter Saturday to Senior Supt. Aaron Fidel, chief of the directorial staff of Police Regional Office-Calabarzon and narrated how Fidel had made him "restive, anxious and fearful" after the incident.

On April 30, Ramos approached Fidel and Senior Supt. Hernando Zafra, the Quezon police director, to ask for an update on the recent assasination attempt against this correspondent, who last month was shot by a gunman on a motorcycle and survived.

According to Ramos, Fidel turned to Zafra and in a joking manner said: "*Dapat ito ang inaambush, eh* (He should have been the one ambushed)," referring to Ramos. "*Ipaambush mo nga ito kapag nagpunta ng* Quezon (Let's have him ambushed when he goes to Quezon)."

Fidel repeated the phrase "at least five times," Ramos said in his letter. "The things that you said to me were no joke and I am not taking it lightly. I consider it a serious and real threat to my life."

Ramos is a member of the board of directors of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP).

Fidel, who was contacted yesterday by the INQUIRERsaid he had yet to receive a copy of Ramos' letter.

But after listening to Ramos' letter read to him in full, Fidel said: "That was a joke. Marlon should not take it seriously. We're all relaxing after a tiring conference and the jolly atmosphere was conducive for a good round of jokes."

He said he would immediately call Ramos to assure him that he meant no harm when he made the "joke."

In his letter, Ramos also claimed that as early as December last year, Fidel had allegedly placed him under surveillance. The newsman had written a series of reports on the "Tagaytay 5," earning him the ire of Calabarzon police officials.

But Fidel vehemently denied this.

"I don't have that power. Besides, why would I do that? One of my missions is to protect and assure the safety of media men," he said.

"I have nothing against Marlon. I admire his zeal and dedication as a journalist. I only requested him to leave the issue of the so-called Tagaytay 5 to the courts," Fidel said.

In his letter, Ramos reminded Fidel that the police had no right to tell reporters what to write.

"I have always been circumspect in writing my stories, including those about the excesses of policemen. I have also always been supportive of the programs of the PNP aimed at maintaining peace and order in the communities," Ramos said.

Copies of Ramos' letter were sent to the INQUIRER, NUJP, Task Force Usig and PRO-Calabarzon.

Police Director Geary Barias, Task Force Usig chief, said he would talk to Fidel about Ramos' allegations.

In Calamba City, meanwhile, Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon has relieved Supt. Rufina Baldovino as chief of the Scene of the Crime Operatives (Soco) in Quezon, for allegedly spreading the story that the failed slay try on this correspondent was a farce.

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A SOLDIER stands guard on a street bordered by campaign posters in Abra. Security remained tight in the province on the eve of the midterm elections today.

AFP

Comelec, monitors, observers: Die is cast

From page A1

tions. For voting precinct, send to 2898: comelectxt precinct (first name)/(middle name)/(last name)/(date of birth-mm/dd/yy). For incidents, send comelectxt report (fullname)/(report). P2.50/message for Globe and Smart, and P2 for Sun.

Since January, Department of Education lawyers, supervisors and schoolteachers—some 450,000 personnel—have undergone seminars on election procedures and the proper performance of their duties.

To avoid delays in paying teachers on election duty, local treasurers will pay half the P3,000 fee, plus P300 travel allowance when teachers get voting materials. The balance of P1,500 is paid upon the return of materials.

The Comelec has given DepEd P30 million to cover medical expenses and death benefits (P200,000 for heirs of deceased) for teachers hurt or killed.

The DepEd has obtained help from lawyers' groups to reassure teachers facing pressure and harassment suits from candidates.

To help ensure impartiality, local prosecutors, who head the provincial and city boards of canvassers, have been reshuffled. Local treasurers, who are the custodians of election materials, have also been reshuffled in Metro Manila and selected places elsewhere in the country.

A million volunteers

The 1 Million Volunteers for Clean Elections (VforCE) is recruiting a million volunteers for voter education and involvement, poll watching, citizens' quick count and monitoring of canvassing.

The VforCE includes the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), which has been accredited for poll watching; the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel), the quick count body; Legal Network for Truthful Elections (Lente) and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, for fielding lawyers to monitor 1,600 canvassing centers; the Catholic Bishops' National Secretariat for Social Action, and other civil society groups.

The PPCRV aims to field two volunteers taking shifts in each of the 224,682 clustered precincts, plus voter assistance desks in polling places. For more transparency, a copy of the election return will be posted at precincts after the tabulation.

To monitor vote tabulation in 1,600 cities, municipal and provincial canvassing centers and provide legal services to poll watchers, Lente is recruiting some 3,200 lawyers and 6,400 law students, paralegals and trained volunteers.

Quick count

Namfrel has restructured its ER reporting system for faster, more accurate transmission of results, and raw data is available from regional centers, with Namfrel headquarters tabulating ERs as they come in.

Major political groups are fielding watchers in the 1,600 canvassing centers. The Genuine Opposition (GO) will cover 95 percent, and GO will have access to ER copies held by the Liberal Party, the designated dominant minority party, under opposition Sen. Franklin Drilon.

Both Comelec and ABS-CBN have text numbers for reporting irregularities, including canvassing fraud, and sending pictures and other evidence captured by cell phone.

New procedures promulgated by the Supreme Court sets a six-month deadline for deciding most election protests with all evidence and other needed information filed.

Foreign observers

The world's leading democracies, including the most powerful nation on earth, have sent more than 200 observers to monitor the elections. The United States sent a contingent of 86. They will see if the country has got what it takes to succeed as a democracy, or if we have doomed ourselves.

In two of his plays, William Shakespeare spoke eloquently of an irrevocable step that has been taken. "The step is taken, I cannot draw back," said Julius Caesar, when he crossed the Rubicon river. Richard III said it more poetically, "I have set my life upon a cast/And I will stand the hazard of the die."

From where we stand today, it may seem like the die was cast in the presidential election of 2004, when we were so enthralled by the epic battle between Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Fernando Poe Jr. Voting individually but deciding collectively, we swept the ruling administration coalition into power, giving it a virtual headlock on local government positions and the House of Representatives.

And so after three years of internecine politics and 90 days of a grueling campaign, we stand today before our Rubicon. In May 2004, we started to become what we have become. Today, we decide what to do with what we became. Tomorrow we start the first day of the rest of our lives. It may do us well to pause and say a little prayer—before we decide.

(The author is chief executive officer of the Institute for Policy Research and Strategic Studies, an independent nongovernment think tank. For comments, email mibc2006@gmail.com)

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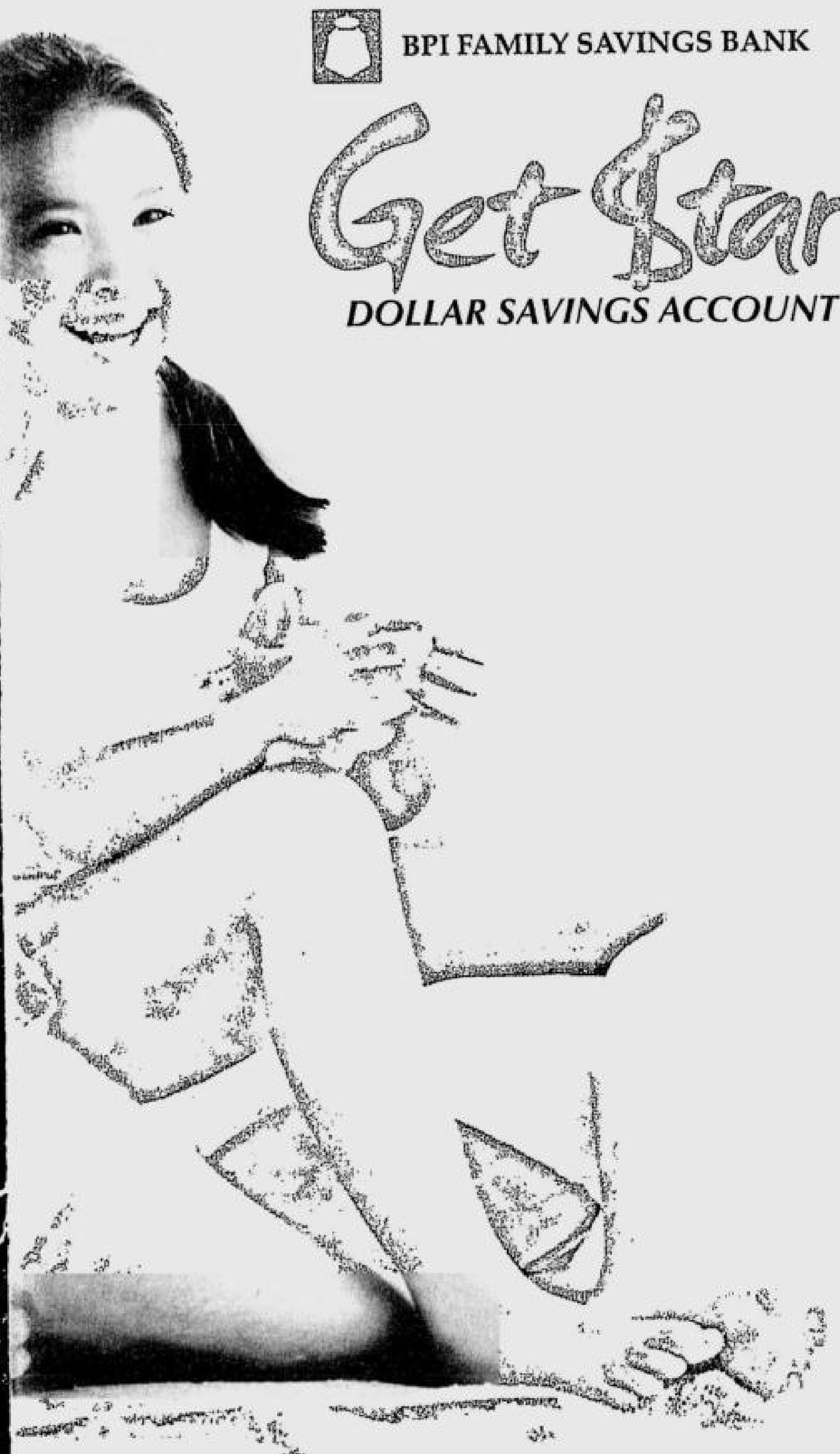

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It's in our hands

EDITORIAL

TODAY WE GO OUT AND VOTE. WE VOTE IN SPITE of a torrent of reports that election cheating is already underway. We vote despite more proof—the obviously compromised decision on Rep. Alan Cayetano's petition to disqualify a nuisance namesake candidate—that the Commission on Elections remains culpably partial to the powers-that-be. We vote even though the political opposition failed to field enough candidates to offer the electorate a true choice.

Today we go out and vote because democracy's fate is in our hands. If we fail to cast our ballot, if we give in to cynicism or despair, if we rationalize away our lack of engagement, we will be losing the battle, ceding the battleground, by default. Democracy's enemies do not need us to troop to the polls; a majority of one vote is enough to win most elective positions. If we do not show up at the polling booth, we are making the job of the cheats, the operators, the manipulators, a whole lot easier. If we skip the exercise altogether, we will let the good candidates down.

It is crucial that we understand why—exactly a hundred years after the first nationwide vote in our history, less than four decades after the untold violence of the 1969 elections, 20 years after the divisive snap election of 1986—today's vote seems headed for a new low.

More opportunities exist to report acts of fraud; the country's two major networks have taken the lead in encouraging "citizen journalists" to record any suspicious activity, for possible airing on TV or uploading to their websites. At the same time, election manipulators who operated during the 2004 vote remain active (some of them, in fact, promoted to or running for higher government office). As Newsbreak magazine has reported, some of them have even learned their lessons from the Garci scandal.

The political opposition's failure to organize, and to prepare properly for this electoral contest, has also made many of its candidates vulnerable to massive fraud. The Arroyo administration's unwillingness, or its incapacity, to form unity tickets in all areas has given Lakas and Kampi candidates the green light to use their administration affiliation and their cash-rich war chests against each other.

The key factor, however, is attitudinal: The main reason the surveys say half of the country's voters believe today's elections will be dirty and dishonest lies in this administration's increasingly pernicious culture of impunity. At its highest levels (think only of bribe-dangler Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, or of politically partisan AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon), this administration practices the most cynical of election policies: Legality is defined by what it can get away with.

No wonder then that everyone else feels emboldened to take the law into one's hands, or redefine it according to one's self-interest. This culture of impunity explains, not only the killing of political militants or the military's intrusion into urban slums, but also the repeated violation of campaign rules and the clearance sale of official election returns. Everyone is busy doing things they think they can get away with.

When we go out and vote today, therefore, we will send the message: Enough.

When we vote today, regardless of who we'll vote for, we will send the message: The people decide. We won't scare away the cheats and the manipulators, but at least we will force them to earn their money.

When we vote today, we will send the message: We support those candidates at the mercy of the operators: the Abang Mabulos, the Jesse Robredos, the Among Ed Panlilios.

Not least, when we vote today, we will send the message: Things may be bad, but we've faced worse odds before. During the Marcos dictatorship, it seemed the height of naiveté to take part in elections. But because enough members of the opposition won seats in the Batasan in 1984, the people managed to give the dictator an impeachment scare—and a foretaste of what was to come in 1986. Because a (slight) majority of Filipinos voted for Cory Aquino over Marcos in 1986, the people were able to give the lie to the official Comelec count. Two weeks later history was made.

Of course, voting isn't enough. We are called upon to protect our ballots, to closely monitor the process until the very end. But it all starts today, with our vote.

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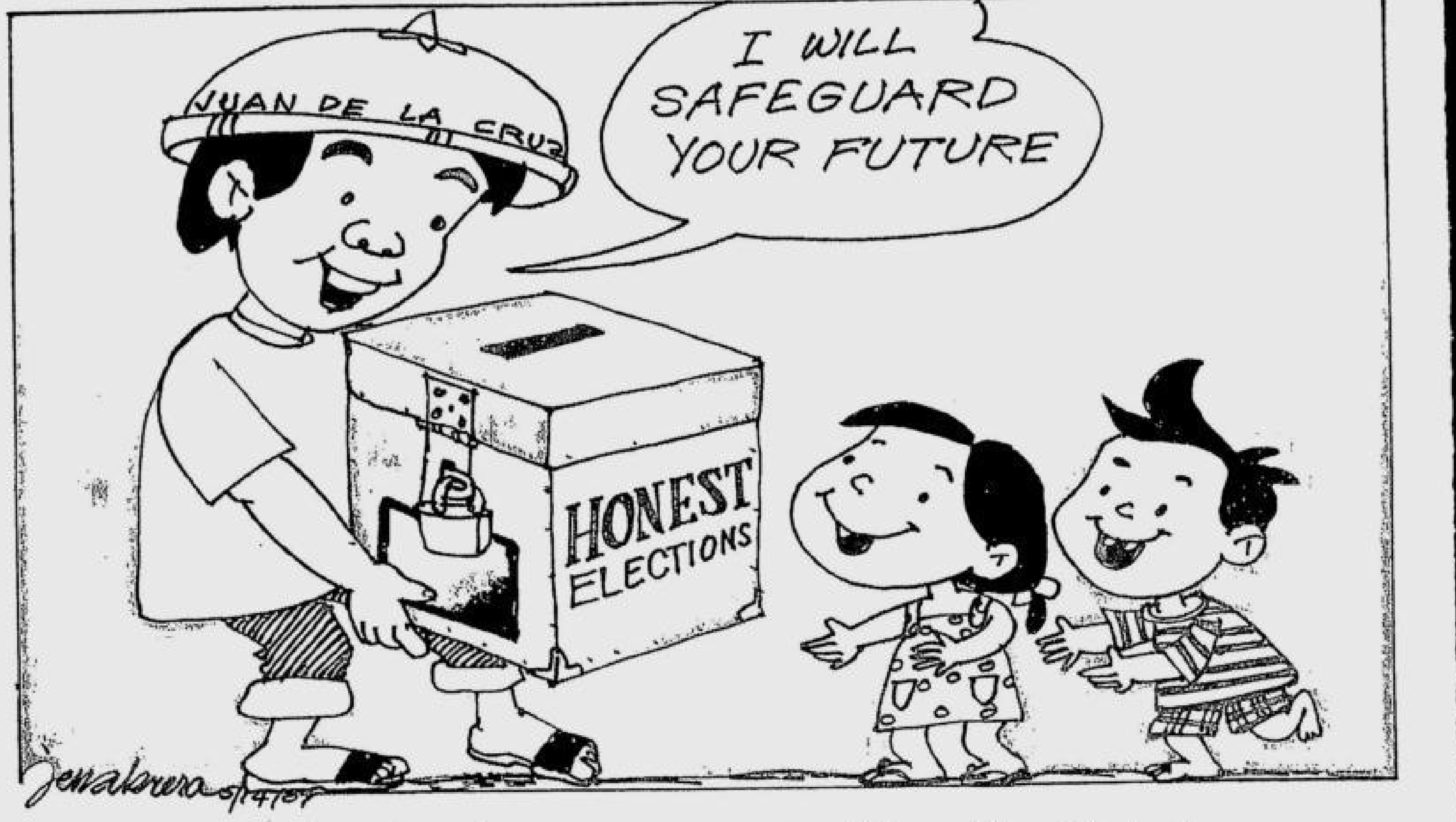

Today is the moment of truth: Vote!

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

THIS IS IT, THE MOMENT OF TRUTH! TODAY is the time to exercise your right to choose your leaders. Go to the voting precincts and vote for your candidates. Choose the candidates who you think will serve your community best.

Don't sell your vote. The candidate who offers, directly or indirectly, to buy your vote is no good. He is not yet in office and he is already violating the law. If you vote for him and he wins, he will do more of the same. He will bribe his way through life. He is corrupting you. He is one of the persons who cause so much corruption in our government. And he is one reason you and many others are suffering.

If you accept his offer, you yourself will be violating the law. The law punishes not only the vote-buyer but also the vote-seller—that's you. For a few hundred pesos you will spend a number of days in jail. You will have a prison record, a blot on your reputation for as long as you live. You will be called a "jailbird, an ex-convict." All for a few hundred pesos, which would be spent and gone by tomorrow anyway. And you will have that nagging guilty feeling for the rest of your life.

But if you reject the bribe offer, you will feel good. You can hold your head up high to anybody. No amount of money can buy that feeling.

* * *

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos and the commissioners should visit Valenzuela City. The whole city is practically one whole poster board. Every street and wall is plastered with the campaign posters of reelectionist Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian and his three younger brothers who are also running for elective positions. Rexlon is running for congressman of the first district; Wesley is running in the second congressional district; while Kenneth is a nominee of the party-list group Anak. They are all sons of Chinese-Filipino plastics king William Gatchalian.

They have practically turned Valenzuela into a Gatchalian Family poster board. No wall, no street, no post, no tree is sacred. It is a disgrace to the Comelec.

The Anti-Postering Law, Republic Act 6646, prohibits the exhibit, display, painting, drawing and hanging of campaign propaganda materials outside designated poster areas. It also limits the size of posters. Multi-story high tarpaulin billboards of the Gatchalian brothers flagrantly displayed in two shopping malls in the city are virtual slaps on the faces of Comelec commissioners. This is a clear ground for disqualification. What is the Comelec doing?

The Metro Manila Development Authority has tried a number of times to clean up Valenzuela. But as soon as the MMDA cleanup crew leaves, the Gatchalian poster teams go back to work, merrily plastering again the just cleaned walls with new posters of the brothers. Because they get away with it. The Comelec does not punish them as the law mandates.

The three younger Gatchalian brothers want to be elected to Congress. But the first public act they are showing to their future constituents is to violate the law. The future lawmakers are lawbreakers first.

Such display of arrogance and abuse is an early sign of what's in store for the people of Valenzuela if they ever get to Congress. Valenzuela is a test case on the credibility of the Comelec and the effectivity of RA 6646.

* * *

As part of black propaganda against Sen. Alfredo Lim—who seems to be on the way to becoming the next mayor of Manila—a story is being spread that he is under investigation by the Commission on Audit for overpricing of supplies bought by City Hall when he was the mayor. Intrigued, I went to the COA office in Quezon City to look at the records of the case.

The COA people showed me a dusty file. There indeed was a case filed for overpricing against Mayor Lim and several others. But in a resolution issued as early as Jan. 25, 2001, Lim and four others were cleared in the case although six others were held liable.

"This Commission is fairly convinced that the findings in SAO Report No. 94-18 are supported by formidable evidence and should be sustained," said the COA resolution. "However, there being a finding of good faith on the part of the movants (Lim et al.) in the instant case, they ought to be excluded from among the persons determined to be liable on the questioned procurements. (The contract was only inherited by Lim from his predecessor.)

"Accordingly, COA decision No. 98-468 is hereby modified in the sense that movants Alfredo S. Lim, Rafaelito Garayblas, Anthony Y. Acevedo, Jose L. Silva and Eufemia D. Rodriguez are excluded from among the persons liable under SAO report No. 94-18."

However, six other persons were held jointly and severally liable for the overpricing.

* * *

The suspension, starting tomorrow, of a battalion commander of the Philippine Army for the abduction of Jonas Burgos, son of the late We Forum publisher Jose Burgos Jr., is cold comfort to his family. Jonas is still missing.

Lt. Col. Melquiades Feliciano, commander of the Army's 56th Infantry Battalion based in Norzagaray, Bulacan, was suspended because the license plates of a Toyota Revo used in Burgos' abduction was traced to a jeep seized in 2006 and parked since then inside the 56th IB's camp in Bulacan. Feliciano claims the plates were stolen by informal settlers living behind the camp.

But where is Jonas? Even Sen. Ralph Recto has expressed alarm over the continued disappearance of Jonas, saying the police should be as assiduous as they were in looking for the remains of Peace Corps volunteer Julia Campbell.

"The full resources of the government should be committed," he said. "But we hope the ending will be happy. That he'll come home soon alive and well to the warm embrace of his family."

'Hello pa rin Garci'

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN THE DANGERS OF satire in this country. It's not so much that the people you satirize get angry. It's that the people you satirize miss the point.

I've seen it happen so many times, enough to make me think that it's not just this country's morals that have deteriorated rapidly, it's also this country's literateness. Lest we forget, satire was Jose Rizal's favorite pastime, and he had an immense talent for it. In his case, the satire was not lost on the people he satirized, who were the friars and colonial authorities, with the most tragic consequences. They made their objections heard through the firing squad.

I myself once wrote an editorial for this newspaper ages ago, satirizing one of the courts in Leyte for firing an elderly clerk and another employee for having an affair. I said, following Mark Antony's example, that it was all right for the people who fired him to do that because they were all honorable men. They might be accepting bribes and womanizing themselves, but they were beyond reproach as they were honorable men. But the culprits, no, they were dishonorable people and so deserved to be punished cruelly.

What happened? The fired clerk filed a libel case against the Inquirer! Fortunately, the court to which the libel case fell proved literate and threw the suit in the same place they threw used condoms.

Virgilio Garcillano has added whole new dimensions to this farce. Early last month, I wrote an April Fool's column about an imagined conversation between Garci and Ma'am, this time Garci helloing Ma'am and asking for her help. At one point Garci tells Ma'am he has decided to turn a bad thing into a good thing and was using "Hello Garci," sung to the tune of "Hello Dolly," as his campaign ditty. The lyrics went:

"Hello Garci, well hello Garci/ It's so nice to have you back where you belong./ You're looking swell Garci, we can tell Garci/ You're still adding, you're still padding/ You're still counting wrong./ We feel our votes straying/ While your hands are playing/ One of your old favorite tricks from way back when./ So make him Rep, fellas,/ Find him an empty seat, fellas,/ Garci you'll never go away again."

Asked why he was using words that were unflattering to him, he answers: "That is not a problem, nobody listens to lyrics here in Bukidnon, Ma'am, *bukid man ini*, people do not understand what they hear."

Life follows art (oh yes, art). Early last week I was completely bowled over by the report of ABC5's Jason Torres that Garcillano had done just that. Not completely or exactly that—he has employed a different set of lyrics, probably figuring the voters of Bukidnon are no provincial buffoons and do understand what they hear—but pretty much that. He has used "Hello Garci," sung to the tune of "Hello Dolly," as his campaign ditty. He has justified that by saying he was turning a bad thing into a good thing. And he has parlayed his shady persona as Garci, something he had denied over the last couple of years, into political capital.

It turns out that the danger of satire in this country is not just that the satirized will take offense or miss the point, it is that the satirized will actually sell themselves with it! I should really believe what I'm saying and realize that I'm dealing with people who are past being put to shame. Satire is only good when it cuts to the quick. It is not good when the satirized—and the public itself—think it has supplanted imitation as the highest form of flattery. These are mind-boggling levels of *pakapalan*.

Garcillano indeed unveils a satire of his own, which is self-satire, though he does so completely unwittingly. If he wins, he says, he doesn't just want to be called "Honorable," he wants to head the House committee on elections! You can't have a better punch line than that—emphasis on punch, as in the face of this nation.

But that is not the best, or worst, satire of all. What is is that—he seems to be thriving from all this! One voter in his district put it this way: They're not really into national controversies. They don't particularly care if Garci really helped GMA cheat or not. As far as he can tell Garcillano seems OK, "*mabait naman siya* (he is kind)," and he takes care of his own, who are the folk of his community. Another put it more succinctly: Garci has the blessings of Malacañang; he has a direct pipeline to it. He will be good for his district.

I was tempted after hearing this to write about the small-time politics syndrome that coddles smugglers, drug lords, gambling lords, murderers, liars, cheaters and thieves, in the not entirely unarticulated belief that he may be an SOB but he is our SOB. But I suddenly realized that isn't true only of small-time politics, or the politics of small towns. That is true as well of the politics of the nation, though that remains also small-time at least in the moral sense. It's not just in local politics that voters allow or help or promote these creatures to prosper in the thought, or delusion, that they are doing themselves a favor, who the hell cares about the rest of the country. It's in national politics as well.

But as the history of this country has shown, the surest way to commit suicide is to think only of yourself. That's what has allowed all sorts of miscreants, deviants and tyrants to rule us.

You're confused about who to vote for in today's election? Well, the choice is simple. You can either choose to make Garci or his look-alikes in the administration ticket "Honorable," or you can choose to be honorable and vote for everybody else, preferably Kapatiran. You can either choose to say "Hello Garci" or "Goodbye Garci."

I can only hope today's exercise does not turn up to be yet another satire on this country.

Qualified or not qualified?

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

NOT DEFINITELY SETTLED UNTIL TODAY IS whether a party-list representative, over and above being supportive of or supported by an underprivileged class, should also be a member of that class. I anticipate that litigation on this subject will arise in the coming months after the party-list winners are known. What can be said about this issue?

I begin with the accepted principle that, when qualifications for an office are enumerated by the Constitution itself, such enumeration is deemed exclusive. No other qualification may be added by a statute; neither may any qualification be dispensed with.

The qualifications for a member of the House of Representatives are enumerated in Sec. 6 of Article VI of the Constitution. In the enumeration, a party-list representative is expressly exempted from the requirement that he be a registered voter of a specific district. He must be a registered voter; but since he does not represent a district but a class, he can be registered in any district. Nothing, however, is said about his ideological leanings or about his economic or sociological status. Is it nevertheless legitimate to conclude that, over and above the constitutionally enumerated qualifications, he must also belong economically or sociologically to the class he or she purports to represent?

Whenever the text of the Constitution does not easily yield a clear meaning, efforts are made to find the meaning in extraneous sources. One logical source is the legislative history of the provision which can usually be found in the deliberations of the body that drafted the document. Does the Record of the Constitutional Commission (ConCom) give us any clue?

Before answering this question let me just assume as a given the fact that jurisprudence has ruled that all the party-list seats, and not just 50 percent of them as originally envisioned by the ConCom, are reserved for the underprivileged sectors. What we have therefore is sectoral representation and not open party-list representation.

The need for reserving permanent party-list seats for the disadvantaged sectors was expressed by a number of ConCom members. Representative of their statements is a brief paragraph from the speech of Commissioner Fely Aquino who said: **"We have a lot of colleagues here who are far older than this humble Member, far more experienced in Philippine politics, and I dare them to dispute my position that for any well-meaning peasant, for example, the road to an elective position is a tortuous obstacle course. We need money, an effective political machinery, and we have to draw deep into the arsenal of propaganda techniques. These are sorely wanting in sectoral organizations, such that a free play of political dynamics will render nugatory the possibilities of the full fruition of sectoral politics. If left to their own devices, it is my fear that sectoral groups will only fall victim to the antagonist and to their own inadequacies."**

Aquino, however, clarified that by this she did not mean that marginal groups were not capable of political sophistication but that sectoral groups would be frustrated if they had to compete with well-entrenched traditional political parties.

I suggest that it is in this context that we must ask whether the Constitution requires that one who presents himself or herself as a representative of a disadvantaged sector must also belong to that sector.

Unfortunately, the only incident close to answering this question in the 1986 deliberations was an exchange between the late Rev. Cirilo Rigos and Commissioner Wilfredo Villacorta. Villacorta had understood Rigos as saying that a priest, imam, or pastor working among the indigenous communities may not be elected as representative of such communities. Rigos said that he had been misunderstood, and that what he meant was that while religious sectors may not be represented, religious leaders themselves may represent a disadvantaged group. Does this mean therefore that a party-list representative need not himself or herself belong to the underprivileged sector?

But Congress itself, through RA 7941, has said that a party-list representative must be "a bona fide member of the party or organization which he seeks to represent for at least ninety (90) days preceding the day of the election." Did Congress overstep its authority?

In 2001, the Supreme Court explained that under RA 7941, the party-list group "must not be an adjunct of, or a project organized or an entity funded or assisted by, the government. By the very nature of the party-list system, the party or organization must be a group of citizens, organized by citizens and operated by citizens. It must be independent of the government. The participation of the government or its officials in the affairs of a party-list candidate is not only illegal and unfair to other parties, but also deleterious to the objective of the law: to enable citizens belonging to marginalized and underrepresented sectors and organizations to be elected to the House of Representatives."

As to the nominees of the party list, the Court said that they "must represent marginalized or underrepresented sectors." And since the party itself must be a party of the underprivileged, should the nominee himself or herself be of the underprivileged—*salvo* the implications of the Rigos-Villacorta exchange about priest, imam, or pastor representatives?

The latest decision of the Supreme Court (May 4, 2007) seems to suggest that even if the party-list itself is qualified, its nominee might not be qualified. We will have to await judicial challenges to the qualification of declared party-list winners. *Abangan*!

Quo vadis, Philippines?

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

"OUR COUNTRY WILL NOT PROGRESS WITH this kind of politics. It's very dirty." Irony of all ironies, the statement came from the person who is at present the icon representing all that makes politics in this country dirty—he is Bukidnon "independent" congressional candidate Virgilio Garcillano. "The incumbents always have undue advantage against his opponents. They use government vehicles, money and resources. That should be stopped," he complained to Mindanews in the run-up to today's polls. Oh, yes, Garci, you're right! And, lest you forget, an incumbent, reelectionist President once called a Comelec commissioner to protect her votes!

But for many of the 45.5 million registered voters expected to troop to the polling precincts today, Garcillano's statement is probably the apposite indictment of today's political exercise, considering the level of electoral violence, as well as the reports of massive vote-buying, overspending by politicians—local and national—systematic electoral fraud, involvement of some military and militant party-list groups; and the rise of more political dynasties, the sidelining of crucial issues like poverty and creeping authoritarianism, etc.

Thus, it is not at all surprising that while many political pundits say this mid-term election is crucial for the country to move forward—away from the shadows of "Hello Garci" that still hounds the Arroyo administration—others consider today's exercise as a non-event. A big number of Filipinos have become cynical of our electoral process—and their number is growing by the day. This spreading cynicism, I suppose, is borne by the fact that despite the serious questions and problems hounding our electoral process, especially after the 2004 elections, no serious electoral reforms were introduced, probably by design, because our politicians stand to benefit most without the reforms. Added to that is the utter failure of state and political institutions, like the Comelec, the police, the military and even the Office of the Ombudsman, to insulate themselves from partisan politics. Also, to a certain extent, church institutions are partly to blame for our people's diminishing faith in our democratic project.

* * *

That fraud will attend today's elections and the subsequent counting and canvassing of votes is, apparently, a foregone conclusion in the mind of many Filipinos. This despite the presence of hundreds of local and foreign observers monitoring the electoral exercise. For, indeed, there is no question that today's polls will determine how the Arroyo administration may survive in the years leading to the 2010 presidential election. While a new impeachment move in the next Congress may suffer the same fate as the previous two attempts, the opposition's solidified control of the Senate will surely thwart any attempt of the administration to tamper with the present Constitution. This is what is crucial to the Arroyo administration. President Macapagal-Arroyo's survival beyond 2010 depends on the outcome of today's polls.

And, by all indications, those who engineered and worked for her questionable victory in 2004 will once again operate and, sadly, Mindanao will once again become the heart of this operation. Already, there are reports that the so-called "political operators" have been busy shuttling from one place to another in Mindanao, particularly in the ARMM, "to secure votes" for administration senatorial candidates.

My greatest misgiving in this election, though, is the failure of the opposition—except for a few party-list groups—to make the administration and its allies accountable for the continuing killings and harassment of leftists, journalists, lawyers and other human rights activists; the massive corruption; the shameless subservience to foreign dictation, particularly that of the United States, and the previous and continuing attempts of the Arroyo administration to destroy our democratic institutions. Nonetheless, I wish that a majority of the Genuine Opposition candidates will make it to the Magic 12, including Chiz Escudero, Koko Pimentel, Sonia Roco, Sonny Trillanes, Loren Legarda, Manny Villar, Noynoy Aquino, Alan Cayetano plus independent Kiko Pangilinan.

* * *

My other candidates: It's my 40th summer today. Due to work, I am away from family and friends. But, for whatever it is worth, I am rooting for these Mindanaoan candidates running in the local polls: "people's lawyers" Tony Azarcon, for Surigao del Sur's seat in Congress; Joe Begil for a council seat in Surigao City; Connie Brizuela for mayor in North Cotabato; Marcos Risonar for board member in Davao del Sur; Anwar Malang, a reelectionist member of the Cotabato City council; Bong Gacal for vice mayor of General Santos City, and Angging Librado, also a reelectionist councilor of Davao City. Also in Davao City, these "hardworking" and young but first-timers in the council race deserve to be elected: lawyer Joji Jude Lumanog (2nd district), social activist Jaypee Ramada (3rd district) and lawyer Rachel Zozobrado.

Militant party-list groups like Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela, are the most vilified, harassed and attacked, but, they deserve to be back in Congress. In this election though, I am personally appealing for the Kabataan Party and Suara Bangsamoro. These two groups, Suara particularly, deserve to be in Congress, not only for their advocacies but, more importantly, so they can help uphold the letter and spirit of the party-list law that is being mangled with the accreditation of Malacañang's "marginalized" groups.

* * *

Comments at kar_laws@yahoo.com or karlos_z23@hotmail.com

Alarming numbers

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

OVER THE WEEKEND, NEWSBREAK PUBLISHED online an article outlining how fraud is expected to take place starting today. The article ("Cheats Adjust Style for Monday Polls," by Miriam Grace A. Go, viewable online at http://www.pubtrust.org/index.php) outlines the 2004 tricks that will not be repeated this year:

- The use of pre-accomplished election returns (ERs) that were switched for the genuine ones before the municipal canvassing began.
- The use of extra certificates of canvass that tampered with actual provincial tallies.

The article also points out the 2004 tricks that will be used again this year:

- Wide-scale operations only in "friendly" cities and provinces.
- An unusually high voter turnout in these areas.
- The buying out, if necessary, of the opposition's poll watchers.

And a new trick:

- Precinct-based cheating will involve teachers, who, as election inspectors, will be tasked to misread the candidates' names in the ballots.

Newsbreak enumerated the provinces that were at the heart of the effort to rig the 2004 elections, and reported this: "An operator said that the administration targets to achieve for each TU candidate a margin of at least 100,000 (votes) over the opposition candidates in the 11 provinces mentioned in the 2005 Newsbreak report. That amounts to a total of at least 1.1 million additional votes per candidate. Bigger margins can be expected in big, solid-voting provinces like Cebu, Pampanga, Bohol and Iloilo."

Bearing this in mind, there are curious figures that appear in the Inquirer.net electoral map (http://www.inquirer.net/map_api/map_api.php). Take note of the provinces identified by Newsbreak as marred by allegations of cheating in 2004, and then compare the 2007 official Comelec voter registration figures in those places with the 2004 figures. Our population grows at, say, 2.5 percent a year; my rule of thumb is any municipality with a voter population increase of over 10 percent deserves scrutiny.

In the provinces of Lanao del Sur and Shariff Kabunsuan (marked with green icons in the map), the number of voters increased by over 20 percent. In Guimaras, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi (marked with blue icons in the map), the number of voters increased from 11 percent to 20 percent.

Everywhere else in the country, there was a 0 percent to 10 percent increase in voter population, except in North Cotobato, Maguindanao and the National Capitol Region, where the number of voters actually decreased.

Opposition-sympathetic areas or bailiwicks in the NCR suddenly have fewer voters: Quezon City by 12.20 percent; Manila, 6.06 percent; Makati, 1.18 percent; Pasig, 10.27 percent; Pasay, 8.29 percent; Taguig-Pateros, 11.02 percent; San Juan, 3.97 percent; Malabon-Navotas, by a whopping 56.88 percent! On the other hand, Mandaluyong, Marikina and Muntinlupa have a higher number of registered voters.

In Cebu—Dumanjug has 24.67 percent more; Poro, 15.11 percent; Aloquinsan, 14.83 percent; Pinamungajan, 12.77 percent; Oslob, 11.79 percent; Malabuyoc, 10.50 percent.

In Pampanga—Sasmuan has 47.59 percent more; Mexico, San Fernando, Apalit, each has 11 percent more. In Iloilo, Miag-ao has 9.23 percent more. In Negros Occidental—Talisay City has 14.94 percent more. In Bohol—Dauis has 15.36 percent more; Panglao, 18.80 percent; Trinidad, 30.6 percent. In Southern Leyte—Hinundayan has 11.12 percent more; Padre Burgos, 12.29 percent.

In Zamboanga del Sur—Josefina has 13.46 percent more; Tabina, 13.52 percent; Labangan, 14.14 percent. In Maguindanao—Cotabato City (which isn't part of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao) has fewer voters by 37.42 percent; Buluan's voting population also dropped by 42.06 percent; but Datu Paglas has 12.52 percent more; so do Datu Saudi Ampatuan (17.78 percent), Datu Abdullah Sanki (19.23 percent), Shariff Aguak (19.83 percent), Datu Unsay (27.63 percent), Paglat (43.05 percent) and South Upi (72.70 percent).

In Lanao del Sur—Buadiposo-Buntong has 120.40 percent more(!); Mulondo, 73.91 percent(!); Tamparan, 66.21 percent(!); Taraka, 51.12 percent(!); Bubong, 49.56 percent(!). In Sultan Kudarat, there's nothing remarkable. In Basilan—Tuburan's voter population decreased by 69.27 percent; and Tipo-Tipo's by 54.94 percent; but there is an increase of 20.95 percent in Maluso, 18.66 percent in Sumisip and 17.40 percent in Lantawan.

The Newsbreak report also says that both administration and opposition political sources point to additional provinces where "special operations" in favor of the ruling coalition could take place: "These are Camarines Sur (the stronghold of Kampi president Rep. Luis Villafuerte), Eastern Samar (where TU assistant campaign manager Ben Evardone is governor), Ilocos Sur (where TU candidate Luis Singson is governor), Surigao del Sur (where TU candidate Prospero Pichay is congressman), Bukidnon (where TU candidate Miguel Zubiri is congressman and his father is governor), and Batangas (where Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita is kingmaker)."

In Camarines Sur, for example, there are 10 municipalities where the number of voters increased by more than 10 percent. As the report says, "The estimate of 100,000-vote margin per candidate per province is consistent with the figures given by another operator, who said that depending on the voters' population of the provinces involved, operators could work out a maximum of two million additional votes for a candidate in 20 provinces. That's an average of 100,000 extra votes per province."

So bear in mind in the coming days: In your area, did the increase in the number of voters reflect real population growth? How many people do you know got to vote, or didn't? And did the canvassing proceed cleanly?

Fall of Corregidor

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

TODAY, WE GO TO THE POLLS. AS I MENTIONED IN MY last column, elections, particularly the midterm contest, at one time provided an opportunity to send a clear signal to the party in power. Unfortunately, these days, there is so much skepticism among our voters. They are discouraged by what they see and hear—the abuse of power by government officials and the lack of integrity of institutions which are supposed to ensure honest and orderly elections. The voters are disenchanted with individuals for whom they had voted in the past but who have turned into political butterflies with little regard for principles. Many of our people do not believe that we can have honest elections. The *dagdag-bawas* shenanigans, the "Hello Garci" incident, the misuse of government funds for election purposes, the suspension of mostly opposition reelectionists just before the elections have deepened voters' suspicions, making them turn away from the whole exercise.

I also share their misgivings. Indeed, I find it difficult to come up with a complete senatorial lineup. From the beginning, I was only sure of three candidates: Martin Bautista, Zosimo Paredes and Adrian Sison, all of the Ang Kapatiran Party. I realize these gentlemen have very little chance of even getting close to the magic circle, but they have my vote and I hope many of our readers will also include them in their lineup. If they score well in Metro Manila and other urban areas, this could be interpreted as some sort of victory for the party. We need their kind of alternatives. People are turned off by the same old faces that seem to plague our political system.

Why Bautista, Paredes and Sison? All three have sacrificed comfortable lives in the community for the chance to participate in the electoral process in accordance with the principles of Ang Kapatiran. These principles include transparency, public accountability and an end to the politics of guns, goons and gold.

Whatever the outcome of this election as regards our three candidates, we must continue to support Nandy Pacheco's vision of a political party consisting of "servant leaders." Only then can we do away with the practice of patronage, the pork barrel and the hypocrisy that has come to be the mark of present-day politics. As I mentioned on one occasion to Nandy, perhaps it is necessary to start at the grass-roots level and gradually build up a nationwide organization that would have a strong foundation and ultimately greater influence in determining new directions for the country.

Yesterday, I added one more name to my lineup. I am voting for Alan Cayetano. At first, I felt that with his sister already in the Senate, it was best to choose other candidates. But the actions of the Comelec as regards the candidacy of another Cayetano have caused me to cast my vote for Alan. If you are unhappy with the manner in which this administration dispenses justice and you wish to send a clear signal to this effect—vote for Alan Cayetano.

Obviously, this is the one candidate the administration does not wish to win, and its henchmen in the Comelec are doing everything to make life difficult for Alan Cayetano. He needs your vote to get into the Senate where he can make life uncomfortable for those in power.

* * *

Last month, we marked the 65th anniversary of the Fall of Bataan in 1942. A force of some 75,000 Filipino and American troops surrendered to a numerically inferior Japanese invasion force under Gen. Masaharu Homma. Earlier, in February of that same year, 60,000 Japanese soldiers, moving on bicycles and with limited food supplies, had captured Malaya and Singapore along with 130,000 British, Australian and Indian soldiers. The Japanese forces were led by Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita who established his reputation as the "Tiger of Malaya."

Last week was also the 65th anniversary of the Fall of Corregidor, the "Gibraltar of the East." In an article on Corregidor, Fred Stolley, who commanded a machine gun platoon on the island and survived three and a half years as a prisoner of war, writes about his experience: "After the Fall of Bataan, the fate of the island was sealed. It could no longer be supplied, it could not 'sail away' and hunger, disease and incessant shelling had so weakened the garrison that the final assault could not be resisted for long.

"With 15,000 men on Corregidor, 4,000 or 5,000 concentrated in the Malinta Tunnel, US Commanders were unable to scrape together a reserve capable of combating 1,000 Japanese (the size of the attacking force). There were many administrators, technicians, and commanders available, but what the 'Rock' needed at this time were fighters.

"Corregidor was finished. All reserves had been committed, all effective guns were out of action, and the Japanese had a beachhead established in force. At 1000 hours on May 6, General Wainwright had his aide broadcast a surrender message to General Homma and orders went out to the troops to destroy their weapons. Corregidor, the 'invulnerable' fortress, had fallen."

In all three conquests, Singapore, Bataan and Corregidor, it should be noted that the Japanese forces were numerically inferior to their opponents. Aside from air supremacy, perhaps discipline and combat experience (many were veterans of the Malaya campaign) were the factors that gave the Japanese the strength to overcome their enemy's advantage in numbers.

* * *

Among the major services of the Armed Forces, the Navy is probably the most tradition-bound. It is a service that remembers the past and pays tribute every now and then to the leaders who have served at the helm of the organization.

In a recent golf tournament at the Philippine Navy Golf Club, Vice Adm. Rogelio Calunsag, the current flag officer-in-command (FOIC), honored all the past FOICs from the first and oldest, Commodore Jose V. Francisco, to the last and youngest, Vice Adm. Mateo Mayuga.

Commodore Jose V. Francisco is remembered as the oldest living and the longest serving FOIC of the Navy. He will soon be celebrating his 98th birthday and continues with his daily round of golf which has helped keep him fit all these years. Vice Admiral Mayuga decided to retire from government service upon reaching age 56. Although he was offered a post as undersecretary at the Department of National Defense, he decided—after consultation with his doctors—that it would be best to stay away from too much pressure and enjoy family life for a change. Mayuga will be remembered for his courageous actions in securing for the Navy billeting facilities which had been taken over by some naval officers.

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A big challenge for us this day

TODAY, MAY 14, WE STAND ON ANOTHER crossroads. Today, we are going to choose a new batch of leaders. It is hoped that we get good leaders to occupy the 17,889 seats up for election, including 12 in the Senate and 275 in the House of Representatives. This is a big challenge for us.

All the 88 million Filipinos are awaiting this important event in the political history of our country with hope, while the whole world is watching how democracy works out in our country in these elections.

The moment of truth has come. The memories of past elections, as well as the disturbing events and worsening conditions that follow every election in this country, make today's elections crucial and urgent. Crucial, considering the big challenges the citizenry faces: there is the challenge to build a new society that will restore all things, including politics, to Christ; there is the challenge to re-awaken society into placing politics basically in the service of the people, and into seeking nobility, competence, integrity and fear of God, among other important qualities, from our leaders. It is urgent because we have to act now—we have to go out and vote.

The Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting urges the electorate to vote wisely and intelligently in accordance with the dictates of individual moral conscience. The PPCRV encourages our electorate to discern carefully and choose candidates who are pro-God, pro-democracy, pro-life and pro-poor. The voters are advised to choose candidates who possess the passion for service in their hearts. The PPCRV tells us not to be afraid. Remain vigilant to uphold the sanctity of your ballot.

In fulfilling this important mission today, may I remind all Filipinos to always turn to God, consult and listen to Him, seek and believe in Him for He is our greatest Master, our most dependable and merciful Leader and Savior who ultimately determines our destiny.

God bless all of us. God bless our motherland, the lovely and peaceful Philippines.

—DR. RICARDO S.D. LEDESMA,
Pius XII Catholic Center,
United Nations Avenue, Manila

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Genuine opposition is a myth

I AM 85 YEARS OLD AND HAVE WITnessed Philippine politics for 72 years. Manuel Quezon Sr. and Sergio Osmeña Sr. were then the leading political rivals. The banding of the two ended my belief that there would be a real check and balance in the affairs of our government.

There is no such thing as "genuine opposition" as shown in the last 72 years; if there was, why then did our country graduate to the dishonorable position as the most corrupt nation in Asia. Why? The genuine opposition gimmick is pure hoax. How many of those in the opposition would stand firm and true to their commitment? Wouldn't the whole bunch turn "GAs" (Genuine Allies) or "GAAs" (Genuine Administration Allies) after they shall have been elected? The administration holds the "pie" and wouldn't the opposition members want a slice of it?

The truth is that the late Sen. Jose Avelino's doctrine—"What are we in power for?"—still holds true. The many rallies of dissent, the New People's Army, the Abu Sayyaf and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front are the residues of our once-civilized politics that has deteriorated to the politics of savages.

However, in spite of all these, a great majority of us Filipinos are still hoping and praying for a miracle and change of character in our national leaders, so that they may be true to their commitment to serve the citizenry and save our country.

—ANGEL D. MAHINAY,
Alburquerque, Bohol

Legal fictions in Philippine democracy

IN A DEMOCRACY, THE TYRANNY OF poverty and ignorance occurs in the ballot box. The so-called "sovereign people" is only a legal fiction.

After the elections, another legal fiction is created, the so-called servants of the people, who will then have their field day of power, wealth and glory.

—AMAY P. ONG VAÑO,
Cebu City

Harnessing the power of the youth

With over 15 million youth voters in our country, the youth has the power to help change the course of the nation by exercising their right to vote.

One responsible vote of a youth gives him a voice. But having a deeper role in nation-building gives that voice the strength in creating change.

In a recent survey conducted by STI in coordination with Studio 23's youth-oriented program "Y Speak" among hundreds of students in Metro Manila, results show how the youth perceives the electoral process and the political scenario in our country today.

Survey results show that our youth is aware of what our country needs. They ranked corruption, education, economy, health and unemployment as the top five pressing issues that our government needs to focus on.

> **A responsible vote of a youth gives him a voice, but having a deeper role in nation-building gives that voice the power to make a difference.**

Based on the survey results, 66% of the students believe that the Philippine elections is based on popularity.

Harnessing the power of the youth today is a major step in building a better and brighter future for our country.

Volunteerism in Action

For Earl, his experience as a volunteer in the May 2004 elections taught him valuable lessons that he could use in and out of school.

"I am thankful that STI gave me an opportunity to be a part of a powerful nation-building process. I had fun working with my friends as a volunteer, monitoring vote counts in the polling precincts, but more than that, I was happy to be able to contribute to my country," says Earl.

"My role as a volunteer may be simple, but I know that I am a part of a strong team working together towards one goal," Earl adds.

Earl is a perfect example of how STI enables its students to be immersed in different activities that contribute to the development of the youth as an important unit of society.

This year, Halalan 2007 provides another venue for STI to give students an opportunity to strengthen their nationalism and show their commitment to the country -- a pursuit beneficial in their development as future leaders of the country.

Halalan '07

STI

ABS-CBN

STI and ABS-CBN have been partners in the past three elections since 1998 for the Halalan Media Count. The partnership of the two globally competitive institutions has been accorded as the country's trusted provider of early election results.

This year, for the fourth time, STI is working together with ABS-CBN in Halalan 2007 to bring fast and reliable vote counts to the public as the counting starts on May 14.

> **"This partnership has taken an even greater significance – the fact that it entails the participation of the young enlightened student volunteers" - Luchi Cruz-Valdes, ABS-CBN Current Affairs Head**

STI will deploy more than 14,000 volunteers in around 22,000 precincts covering 48 provinces nationwide.

This partnership mirrors the commitment of STI in helping the youth to become the catalysts of nation-building through heightened community involvement and inculcating in them a deeper sense of love for country.

In the words of Monico V. Jacob, STI President and CEO, "STI and ABS-CBN share the same objectives, and that is to help the country attain its goals through clean elections."

Luchi Cruz-Valdes, Current Affairs Head of ABS-CBN elaborates that this partnership has taken "an even greater significance – the fact that it entails the participation of the young, enlightened student volunteers from STI".

Biased vs Pimentel?

THE ARTICLE "NATION GOES TO POLLS ON a wing and a prayer" (INQUIRER 5/13/07) says that "In comparison, Pimentel xxx [has] remained virtually in the same [slot] xxx," referring to the SWS survey allegedly taken from May 2 to 4, 2007. That SWS survey placed my ranking in "Total RP" at No. 14 with 26% of the respondents voting for me.

I am in the same slot **because the SWS intentionally kept me there!** The SWS is up to something and is setting me up. The SWS is projecting the victory of somebody at my expense!

Why do I say that the SWS intentionally kept me at No. 14?

Let us consider the Senatorial Preferences by Area of that SWS May 2-4, 2007 survey. The SWS said I placed No. 14 in Mindanao and No. 18 in the Visayas. Who would believe such results? If the SWS statisticians had taken a look at their own previous survey results, then they would themselves doubt their own figures!

Consider my Mindanao figures:

Pimentel rank in Mindanao: SWS (April 14-17)—8; Pulse Asia (April 21-25)—4; SWS (May 2-4)—14.

Is the SWS trying to tell us that I fell from No. 8 to No. 14 in Mindanao in a matter of 15 days? If we take into account the results of the Pulse Asia survey, then are we to believe that I fell from No. 4 to No. 14 in Mindanao in just six days?

Consider too my Visayas figures:

Pimentel rank in Visayas: SWS (April 14-17)—8-9; Pulse Asia (April 21-25)—12; SWS (May 2-4)—17-18.

Is the SWS telling us that I fell from No. 8-9 to No. 17-18 in the Visayas in a matter of 15 days? If we take into account the results of the Pulse Asia survey, then are we to believe that I fell from No. 12 to No. 17-18 in the Visayas in a matter of six days?

During this period (April 18 to May 1), I released a new TV ad with celebrity endorser Angel Locsin. Is the SWS trying to tell us that many Mindanaoans and Visayans dislike this TV advertisement so much that they changed their voting preference for me?

The SWS explanatory note shows their bias against me. It says: "The last two seats are being statistically contested by: 11. Angara (32%), 12. Arroyo (31%) and 13. Sotto (28%) xxx." But since the survey itself admits of a margin of error of plus or minus 3%, then Angara's 32% is still reachable by my 26% since 32 minus 3 is 29 which is equal to 26 plus 3. The SWS' statisticians know that! So, why was my name omitted as one of those "statistically in contention"?

The SWS has clearly shown its bias against me. It is clear that there is a "project" to bring me down in Mindanao and the Visayas and the SWS survey of May 2-4, 2007 was the preliminary step to condition the minds of our voters. But my team will definitely do something to counter this illegal and immoral "project."

Until the SWS competently explains its dubious results and conclusions, I suggest that we bar the SWS from conducting exit polls until its competence to conduct surveys and interpret survey data is proven before the science and mathematics community.

—AQUILINO "KOKO" PIMENTEL

Why administration won in 1987 elections

IN HIS LETTER, JOHN DEE COMPARED THE May elections this year to the 1987 senatorial elections "where the administration controlled the local political field and the opposition had little or no financial support." He further claimed that the "administration was able to capitalize on those advantages." (INQUIRER, 5/3/07)

Sadly, Dee failed to mention that the only real advantage the Aquino administration had in 1987 was the tremendous goodwill that it enjoyed as a result of the Edsa People Power in February 1986.

Thus, the electorate voted for 22 out of the 24 senatorial candidates of the administration ticket. And indeed, Bobbit Sanchez would have won if not for the nuisance candidate with the same surname as his.

The tremendous popularity of then President Corazon Aquino was further manifested when an overwhelming majority of the Filipino electorate ratified the 1987 Cory Constitution in a plebiscite. Many, if not most, voted "Yes" even without the benefit of reading the Charter they were asked to ratify.

—RB RAMOS,
rbrparadigm@yahoo.com

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Comelec disqualifies congressional bet

By Alex Pal
Inquirer Visayas

DUMAGUETE CITY—THE COMMISSION ON Elections has disqualified Edgar Y. Teves from running for congressman of the third district of Negros Oriental, covering the southern part of the province.

The Comelec ruled en banc that Teves was not qualified to run and hold any elective public office within five years from May 24, 2005, because he had been convicted by the Sandiganbayan of a graft case in 2004.

The resolution, dated May 11, 2007, was signed by presiding Commissioner Resurreccion Z. Borra and Commissioner Romeo A. Brawner.

The decision was learned one day after Teves filed graft, bribery and violation of the code of conduct of government officials against provincial election supervisor Manuel Advincula in an entrapment operation led by the National Bureau of Investigation.

Teves alleged that Advincula asked P300,000 from him to fix this case.

Direct bribery

City Prosecutor Adrian Borromeo, after inquest proceedings, filed the direct bribery case against Advincula in court on Friday.

The disqualification case against Teves was filed by his uncle, Rep. Herminio Teves, who is backing his grandson, Pryde Henry Teves, in the congressional race in the third district.

Edgar Teves had been convicted by the Sandiganbayan of violation of Section 3(h) of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, which was affirmed with modification by the Supreme Court on Dec. 17, 2004.

The case stemmed from Teves' operation of a cockpit in Valencia town where he was mayor in the mid-1990s.

The high court fined Teves P10,000 but did not impose the accessory penalty of perpetual disqualification from public office.

In his petition, Representative Teves argued that Edgar Teves was convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude and was prohibited from holding any elective position within a five-year period from his service of the sentence, as provided for under Section 12 of the Omnibus Election Code.

Moral turpitude, the Comelec said while citing the case of Soriano v Dizon, "is defined as an act of baseness, vileness or depravity in the private duties which a man owes his fellow men, or to society in general, contrary to the accepted and customary rule of right and duty between man and woman or conduct contrary to justice, honesty, modesty or good morals."

Moral turpitude

The Comelec said that while the crime that Teves was convicted of might not involve moral turpitude itself, still the totality of facts showed the respondent's moral turpitude.

Teves tried to circumvent the prohibition by saying he had divested himself of any interest in the cockpit in favor of his wife.

In fact, he only transferred the management of the cockpit but not the ownership, the Comelec said.

"[Teves] maintained ownership of the cockpit by deceit. He has the duty to divest himself but he did not and instead employed means to hide his interests. He knew that it was prohibited but he nevertheless concealed his interest thereon. The fact that he hid his interest denotes his malicious intent to favor self-interest at the expense of the public."

"Only a man with a malevolent, decadent, corrupt and selfish motive would cling on and conceal his interest, the acquisition of which is prohibited. This plainly shows his moral depravity and proclivity to put primacy on his self interest over that of his fellowmen," the resolution said.

The Comelec reckoned the start of the five-year period which Teves was disallowed from seeking and holding public office at May 24, 2005, the day he paid the fine of P10,000.

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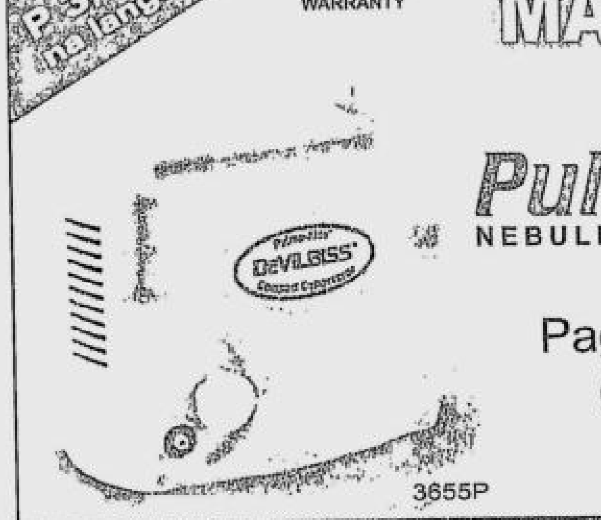

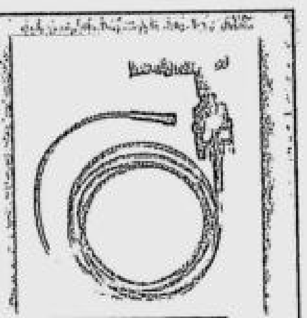

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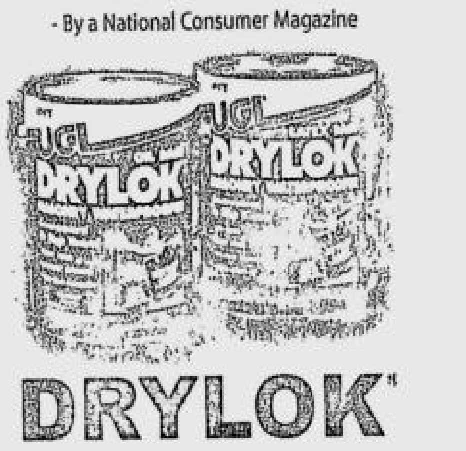

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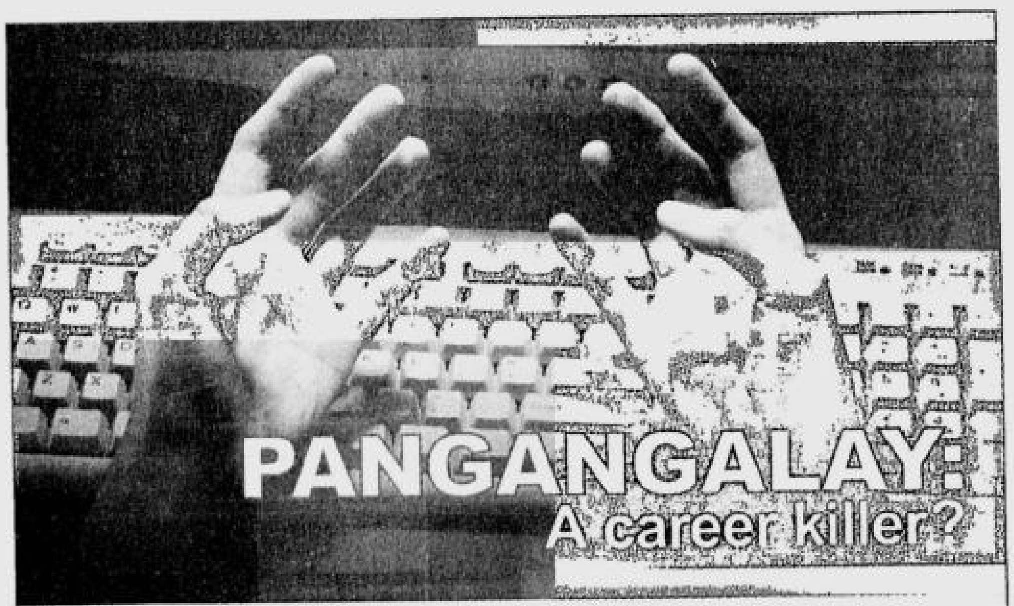

"Naalala ko pa noong una ko 'tong naramdaman," sabi ni Donna, isang 30 year-old secretary. "It was late, around eight o'clock, pero may tinatapos pa ako sa office. I'd been typing the whole day, then biglang nangalay ako. Grabe, naging stiff talaga ang mga kamay ko! 'Di ko matapos-tapos yung pag-type ko."

Ilang buwang tiniis ito ni Donna. Pabalik-balik ang matinding pangangalay at pamamanhid.

Minsan pa nga'y may kasama pang lower back pains ito. "Since I was always sitting down, my back would hurt. Hassle talaga. Minsan nagsasabay pa ang dalawa."

Hindi nagtagal, naapektuhan ang trabaho ni Donna. "Sinisita ako ng boss ko dahil ang bagal ko raw magtrabaho. Eh ang sakit talaga mag-encode. Kailangan talaga dahan-dahan."

Napadalas ang pag-OT ni Donna para habulin ang tumatambak niyang trabaho. Kaya naman lalong lumala ang mga problema niya sa katawan.

"Isang beses sumabit ako sa deadline. Galit na galit ang boss ko. I thought I was going to get fired."

Dahil dito, nagpatingin na si Donna sa doktor. Sinabi ng doktor na ang paulit-ulit na pagkilos at stress sa isang parte ng katawan ay pwedeng maging sanhi ng "nerve compression" o pag-ipit ng ugat. Kung may kasamang kakulangan ng B-complex sa diet, maaaring mangyari ang pangangalay o 'pamamanhid.

"Minsan kasi 'di ako nakakapag-almusal 'pag nagmamadaling pumasok," ayon kay Donna. "Tapos 'pag sobrang daming work, I have a quick lunch lang. Sabi ni Doc malamang kulang nga daw ako sa B-complex. So he prescribed B-Complex vitamins. Sabi niya it would help heal the damaged nerves na nagdulot ng pangangalay."

Kaya inumpisahan ni Donna mag-Pharex B Protected araw-araw. Nagulat siya sa epekto nito. 'Di nagtagal, nawala ang pangangalay ng mga kamay niya pati na rin ang sakit sa kanyang likod.

"Ang galing ng Pharex B Protected! Umayos ang trabaho ko. Kaya na-promote ako."

"Sinisita ako ng boss ko dahil ang bagal ko raw magtrabaho"

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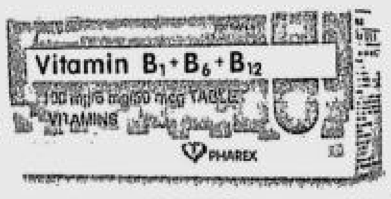

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Observers to see if GMA still has magic

CEBU CITY—A GROUP OF FOREIGNERS are in Cebu to see if President Macapagal-Arroyo still has the magic that gave her the one million-vote margin she had in 2004 against the late actor Fernando Poe Jr.

"We are interested in seeing if Ms Arroyo's local bets will win," Fr. Diony Cabillas of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente said in a press conference yesterday.

Cabillas, who serves as the vice team leader of the Cebu delegation of the People's International Observers' Mission (IOM), is the lone Filipino in the four-member team in Cebu.

The three foreigners are among 25 foreign delegates from the United States, Canada and the European Union who will be observing the conduct of today's elections across the country.

Aside from Cebu, the teams of foreign observers are in Metro Manila, Nueva Ecija, Quezon, Sorsogon, Lanao and Compostela Valley.

"This is not the first time that we have foreign observers. We've had them in the 2001 and 2004 elections," Cabillas said.

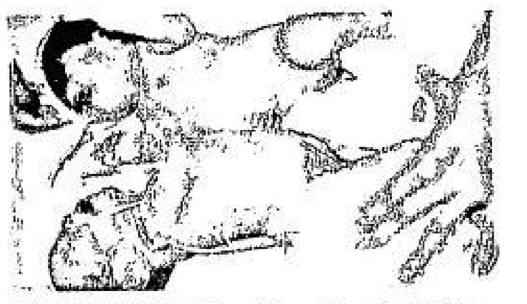
He added that the team would "try to see what happens in the polling centers" and "how we go about the canvassing of votes."

The team will be in the towns of Tabuelan and Tuburan and in the cities of Danao and Toledo today and at the Capitol tomorrow for the canvassing of votes.

"We may also be in other areas, depending on what happens. We still will not be able to tell just now," said Elizabeth Hendrickson of the English Lutheran Church from the US.

Minerva Gutierrez of the Quebec Solidaire, a political party in Quebec province in Canada, said the team's primary purpose was to observe.

Fr. Rey Galloagan of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), a co-convenor of Kontra Tikas, the Cebu-based group that invited the delegates, hoped that the presence of people from the international community would help minimize the culture of fraud and violence in the country. *Medora Nimfa Quirante, Cebu Daily News*



THREE-DAY-OLD conjoined identical twins Gabby and Rose Atuel before their separation. KIT BAGAIPO

Doctors separate conjoined twins

By Kit Bagaipo, *Inquirer Visayas*

TAGBILARAN CITY—TWO SURGICAL TEAMS successfully separated 3-day-old conjoined identical twins Gabby and Rose Atuel at the Gov. Celestino Gallares Memorial Hospital (GCGMH) here at 4 p.m. on Saturday.

Mary Jane (Gabby) and Mary Kris (Rose) were born omphalopagus twins, a condition where both are conjoined in the abdomen, on May 10 at the San Miguel Infirmary Hospital in San Miguel, Bohol, before they were brought to the GCGMH.

This is the first case doctors here had to deal with conjoined twins.

What amazed doctors was that their mother, Rosalie Atuel, 17, a single parent, had a normal delivery of the 4.8 kilogram twins with the aid of a trained "hilot" (midwife), according to her surgical doctors.

The surgical teams, led by Cebu-based pediatric surgeons Dr. Joseph Alesna and Dr. Maribel Du together with the surgical teams of GCGMH headed by Dr. Zaldy Buac, operated on Gabby and Rose for just over 22 minutes after extensive preparations.

The twins' neonatologist, Dr. Mutya Tirol-Macuno said a CT-scan showing no major organs that are shared between the two provided the doctors high hopes for the success of the surgical procedure.

The operation required doctors to cut off a soft tissue and part of the twins' chest bone (sternum), she said.

Alesna and Du said both Gabby and Rose were expected to live normal life spans after the separation.

The doctors observed that the twins' vital signs were stable enough and they were closely monitoring their recovery.

They were optimistic that both can be fed normally in three to four days after the operation while they stressed the importance to protect them from infection and bleeding at this stage.

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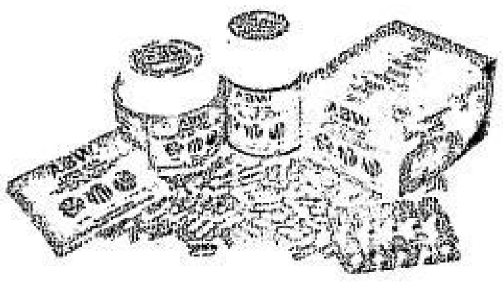

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S. Leyte town voters 'harassed' to vote for mayoral bet

MAASIN CITY—AT LEAST 300 RESIDENTS from mountain villages of Southern Leyte's town of Sogod, 70 kilometers away, trooped to the provincial elections office demanding the transfer of their polling places in today's election because of alleged harassment by armed men believed to be soldiers.

The residents were allegedly being asked to vote for former 43rd Infantry Battalion commander Lt. Col. George Rabusa, who is running for mayor in Sogod under the Kabalikat ng mga Mamamayang Pilipino against incumbent Mayor Sheffered Tan (Nationalist People's Coalition-Liberal Party), said PO3 Raul Duterte, assistant investigator of the Sogod police.

Rabusa was the commander of the 43rd IB which was based in Sogod for almost two years from 2003 to the end of 2004.

Duterte said in a telephone interview yesterday that the people were reportedly told by armed men to vote for Rabusa or they would be evicted from their houses.

Provincial election supervisor Felicisimo Embalsado, however, said he could no longer transfer the polling precincts in these villages for lack of time.

"Their demand is not already feasible considering the time-frame," he said.

He suggested though that he could allow the transfer of the canvassing to "safe area."

"Allowing the transfer could be done at the provincial level. All they have to do is for the board of elections inspectors and the watchers to request the transfer of canvassing," Embalsado said.

Manuel Enage, a lawyer for the NPC-LP coalition, asked the provincial election supervisor to replace the military men deployed in Sogod with policemen.

"With the PNP, the electorates would not be intimidated unlike in the military where the former boss is running for mayor,". Enage said.

A barangay leader identified with Tan had earlier sought Rabusa's disqualification for lack of residency but this was junked by the Comelec.

Safety in Albay

In Albay, the Department of Education has requested the Commission on Elections to allow the Board of Election Inspectors to count in the urban centers the ballots cast in poll precincts in far-flung villages.

The request was aired by Diosdado San Antonio, Ligao City district office superintendent, during a meeting of the City Peace and Order Council at the municipal hall on Tuesday.

San Antonio said the counting of votes in precincts in isolated areas might endanger the safety of the BEI members.

He echoed the apprehension of the teachers following reports of the presence of armed groups harassing supporters and followers of reelectionist Gov. Fernando Gonzales.

Gonzales has called the attention of the Army and police regarding the alleged harassment by New People's Army rebels and armed goons in some villages.

In Tabon-Tabon, Daraga, Albay, for instance, residents have complained of the presence of armed men warning them that something would happen to their village head if the candidate of the NPA for governor would not win in their village.

The military's Southern Luzon Command chief, Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano, has ordered subordinates in the area to verify the complaints of the residents.

Celedonio Layon, DepEd regional director, said "two teachers were reported to have been abducted in Esperanza, Masbate by unidentified men two to three days ago but were returned safe immediately."

He said he asked the DepEd officials in Masbate to verify and substantiate the reports.

Layon said the teachers were covered by P30 million worth of insurance given by DepEd.

He said the DepEd had formed task forces in the district, division and regional levels to assist the teachers in their problems, especially legal matters.

Police and Army officials have assured the teachers sitting as BEI members of their safety.

Members of the Ligao City Peace and Order Council agreed that the city government would provide Comelec-deputized vehicles to ferry the BEI members, party watchers and ballots to the counting centers in the city proper, preferably the national high school.

Army soldiers will secure the route of the vehicles.

Appeal

More than a hundred cars, buses, trucks, vans and motorcycles toured the six towns of the first district of Albay on Thursday morning to block the proliferation of "money politics" in the final stretch of the campaign period.

Thousands of people calling for clean and honest elections took to the streets to highlight the Church and civil society's campaign against traditional politics that dominates the upcoming election.

The Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, Jaycees, White Carabaos, Knights of Columbus, Divine Mercy, Lord of Pardon, Social Action Commission and Youth Ministry gave their support to the campaign.

Msgr. Ramon Tronqued, vicar general of the Legazpi diocese, said the caravan was organized by various church organizations to appeal to the people to repudiate candidates who use "guns, goons and gold" in their bid for public office.

The caravan ended at the Our Lady of Salvation in Joroan, Tiwi, where participants made a commitment not to sell votes and to continue the fight against money politics and politics of patronage.

A similar caravan was held yesterday in the first and second districts, starting in Oas and passing through the typhoon-ravaged Ligao, Guinobatan, Camalig and Daraga, and culminating in front of the Capitol where a liturgical activity was held.

In Lucena City in Quezon, two Catholic bishops, clergy leaders and a Protestant pastor called on voters to elect candidates based on their moral standing, environmental protection advocacy and competence to the posts they were aspiring.

Candidates should be scrutinized by the type of supporters around him and if these financiers are engaged in illegal activities in drugs, gambling, logging and fishing, said Bishop Rolando Tria Tirona, head of the Prelature of Infanta. *Jani Arnaiz, Inquirer Visayas; Bobby Q. Labalan, Ephraim Aguilar and Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

3 dead in Army-NPA clash in Mt. Province

BONTOC, MT. PROVINCE—THE DEATH toll in the clash between government troops and communist rebels here on Saturday has risen to three after two more soldiers died at the Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center (AFPMC) in Quezon City.

Col. Bonifacio Talde, commander of the Task Force Montañosa, said S/Sgt. Ernesto Pico and Pfc. Oliverio Viernes, who were among the 18 wounded soldiers and policemen in the clash, died on Saturday night due to bullet wounds in the head and abdomen.

The Army initially reported that Pvt. Vincie Ezperanzate was killed during the gunfight with members of the New People's Army's Leonardo Pacsi Command operating in Mt. Province.

Talde said Pico and Viernes were taken by helicopter to the AFPMC on Saturday afternoon following the clash in Sitio Sukit, Barangay Samoki here.

Reports said the group of about 60 soldiers and policemen under the Task Force Montañosa came from Natonin, Barlig and Paracelis towns and was returning to Bontoc when they were attacked on Saturday noon.

The soldiers and policemen went to the three towns after candidates there reported the presence of communist rebels.

Talde said additional soldiers from Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya were sent here following the attack. Checkpoints were also put up in various towns in the province to stop the movement of communist rebels.

In Quezon province, an Army officer was killed in an encounter between government forces and NPA rebels in Barangay Bantad in Gumaca on Friday morning, a belated police report said Saturday.

The report identified the casualty as Sgt. Samuel Salazar from the Army's 76th Infantry Brigade.

Army troops led by one 2nd Lt. Medrino were on patrol in the area at about 6 a.m. when they encountered an undetermined number of NPA guerrillas.

Combined police and military forces have been immediately dispatched to track down the fleeing rebels.

Government forces also scoured hospitals and clinics in neighboring towns in search of wounded rebels. *Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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Tamano said."... it is under the Arroyo administration that the Philippines was recently called as the most corrupt country in Asia," referring to the results of a survey by the Hongkong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy.

The Daily Tribune, May 9, 2007

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"The graph that most media referred to did not rate corruption in Asia."

"Corruption is also something that can and is being politicized in ways that are not particularly helpful to the country's development ***but only to serve to push the political agendas of those seizing upon the topic in a particular way"***

"I hope this clarification of what we at PERC actually wrote and analyzed will help you keep the focus on what we know is an important issue but is also one that can be ***abused by people for their own political ends"***

Robert Broadfoot
Managing Director, PERC
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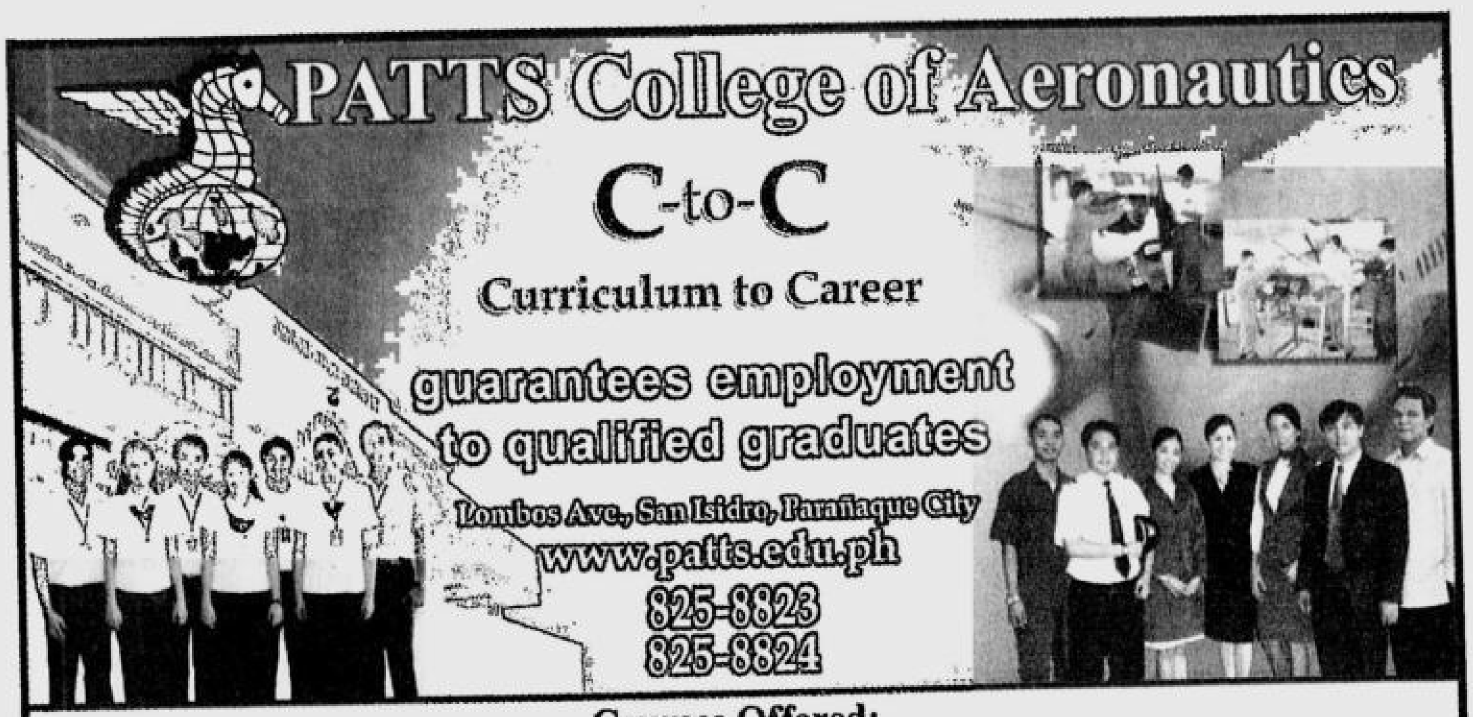

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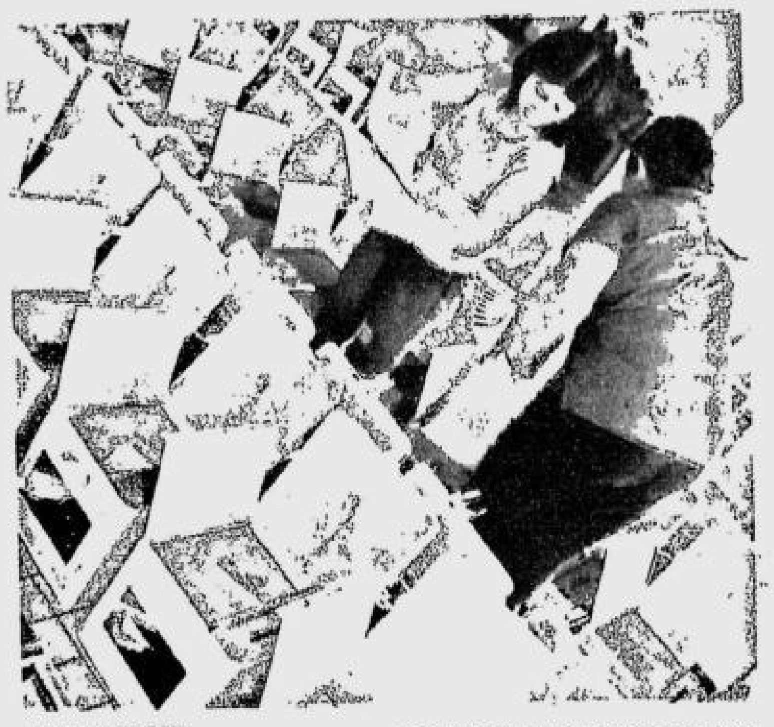


LAST HOUR NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Commission on Elections personnel from Camalig, Albay, put different forms inside the ballot boxes to be used on Election Day today.

Mayoral bet, village chief held for guns

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—POLICE ARrested on separate occasions on Saturday an incumbent vice mayor who is running for mayor in Buenavista, Quezon, and a suspected leader of a private armed group of the reelectionist mayor of Taysan, Batangas, for possession of unlicensed guns.

Regional Special Operations Group chief Supt. Roger James Brillantes said the lawmen searched the house of Buenavista Vice Mayor Remedios Uri Rivera in Barangay Catlid at around 6:30 a.m. after receiving reports that she and her bodyguards were frequently seen carrying high-powered firearms while campaigning.

But what they recovered were a homemade shotgun, bullets for .38 cal. pistol and 5.56 cal. rifle, and eight magazines for M-16 rifles.

Brillantes said Rivera's men could have taken the firearms and hid them elsewhere before the policemen came.

He said cases of illegal possession of firearms and ammunitions would be filed against the vice mayor, who is now detained at the RSOG office here.

Also arrested was Sonny de Alday, village chief of Barangay Mabayabas, Taysan, Batangas, and said to be the leader of civilian armed bodyguards of reelectionist Taysan Mayor Anacurita Portugal.

Brillantes said his men raided his home and seized a 9-mm pistol and bullets for 9-mm pistol,.30 cal. Carbine rifle and .38 cal. revolver.

Eastern Samar, Palawan

Brillantes said police had information that De Alday headed a group of armed men being used as private bodyguards of Portugal.

He said investigators were still checking if the village chief, who is now detained at the RSOG prison cell, had any other criminal records.

On Friday, police seized firearms and ammunition from the homes of several candidates and their supporters in separate raids in Eastern Samar and Palawan.

Eastern Visayas police confiscated seven firearms in a raid on the house of Javier Zacate, reelectionist mayor of Sulat town, Eastern Samar.

Seized were machine pistols, assault rifles, handguns and hunting rifles.

Zacate said the raid was an act of political harassment. He said the firearms were licensed.

Puerto Princesa City police raided the house of Tatan Anicete, leader of the Commando Brotherhood, a fraternity, in Barangay Sicsican, and confiscated high-powered firearms on Friday.

Palawan police director Senior Supt. Dennis Peña said the police recovered two Thompson sub-machine guns, a .38 cal. revolver, a 9-mm handgun and assorted bullets.

"Anicete failed to present legal documents to own the firearms," Peña said over the phone.

He said the suspect was detained at the city police station pending the filing of charges against him.

Sariaya, Quezon

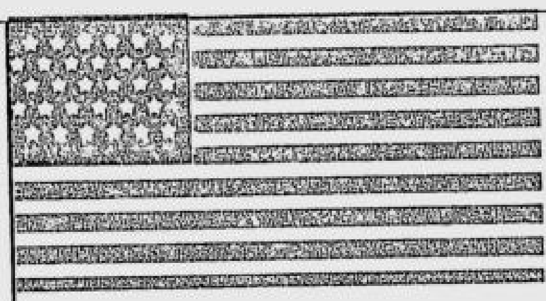
On May 4, police filed charges of illegal possession of firearms and violation of the election gun ban against the reelectionist mayor of Sariaya, Quezon, and six of her alleged bodyguards who were accosted on Friday at a checkpoint.

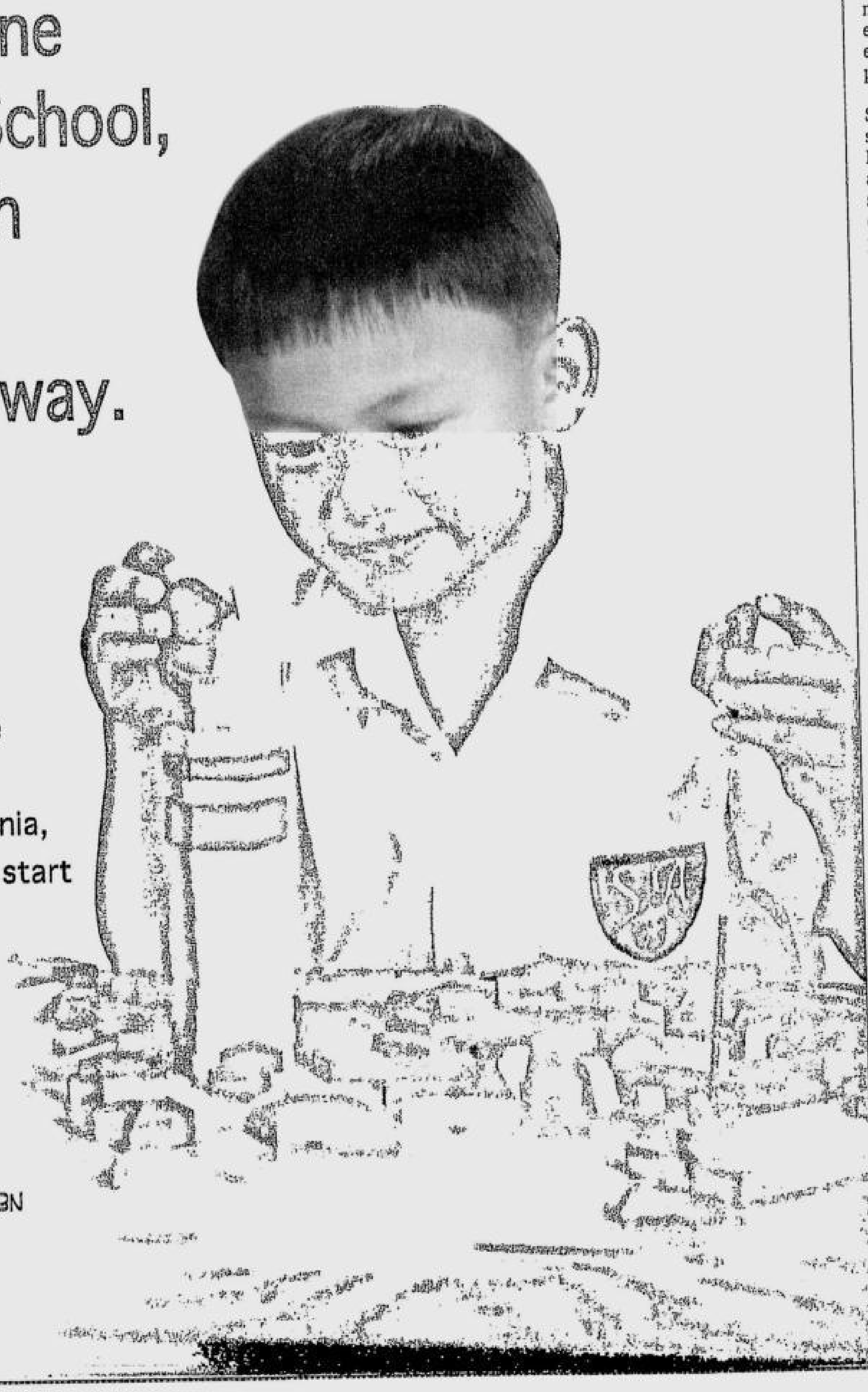
Senior Insp. Javier Baasis, public information officer of the Quezon police, said there was strong evidence to link Sariaya Mayor Concepcion Doromal to the confiscation of the cache of firearms from one of the vehicles in the mayor's convoy.

Baasis said initial investigation showed that the six men, who were riding in a Hummer sports utility vehicle (VCM 268) that was flagged down at the military-police checkpoint in Barangay Montecillo, Sariaya, were Doromal's escorts.

"We were able to confirm from the LTO (Land Transportation Office) that the Hummer vehicle was registered under Mayor Doromal's name," he said in a press briefing.

Doromal denied that she knew the suspects. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon; Joey A. Gabieta and Cyrain Cabueñas, Inquirer Visayas*





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All eyes on Mindanao

From page A1

what they'd done," Dalidig told reporters.

Citing information that she said voters had passed on to her group, Pakistani foreign observer Mossarat Qadeem said the elections appeared to be over.

"The deal has been done ... The stage is set," Qadeem said, quoting Lanao residents. "There will be an engineered election."

There are some 10.6 million registered voters in Mindanao.

Dalidig said he had received information that negotiations were in progress for a *dagdag-bawas* (vote-padding and -shaving) operation to favor three senatorial candidates.

He said that, according to his information, "participating Comelec personnel" would be paid P20 for every vote added to the trio.

This would be double the price for a similar *dagdag-bawas* operation in 2004, which was P10 per vote, he said.

Vote-buying has also begun.

Dalidig said that based on his team's monitoring as of Saturday, standing offers for a gubernatorial vote go as high as P300.

Fears of cheating in today's balloting have thrown into focus the tricks politicians use to achieve victory at whatever cost.

Perpetration of these tricks requires the cooperation of members of the board of election inspectors (BEIs) in the precincts, Comelec personnel, unscrupulous personnel of the National Printing Office, and the police and the military deployed for security purposes.

The cooperation of these officials may be obtained through a mix of fat bribes, threats and intimidation.

Preelection tricks

These tricks have been documented in several Mindanao provinces since 2001.

- *Padding the voter's list:* Traditionally, this is achieved by including the names of dead people. The practice waned following Comelec's voter verification campaign.

Another mode is multiple registration. One approach is registering nonresidents, another is having a single person register in as many precincts as possible.

Comprising more than 10,000 students, mostly transients, the Mindanao State University (MSU) in Marawi City is a rich source of nonresident individuals registered as voters.

One Marawi native, who now lives in Iligan City, casually confided to the INQUIRER how he used different names and adopted varying looks or appearance to get into the voters roll of two precincts in two barangays, one in Marawi and another in Marantao.

- *Vote-buying:* There are generally two types of vote-buying operations: "*pang-hapin* (underlay)" and "*pusil* (ambush)."

Underlay operations mean selling one's vote to a candidate a few days or on the night before the balloting. This would give him time to sell his votes to other candidates willing to pay.

An ambush operation involves buying the votes of undecided people or the loyalties of those who have already sold their votes to others. The ambush is usually done near polling centers.

Price competition

As in any market, candidates outdo each other in price offers. This is effective in localities with only a small number of voters, like in many towns of Lanao del Sur.

To achieve economy of scale in vote procurement, price premiums are offered for bulk transactions, like for an entire family or clan.

The Islamic Movement for Electoral Reforms and Good Governance (IMERGG) has documented that as early as February, negotiations for such type of vote-buying have occurred in many Lanao del Sur towns.

In one deal, as much as P100,000 was offered to a family of five voters.

Given the widespread poverty, the amounts offered are driving people to sell their votes. As a sweetener, there are areas in Lanao del Sur where candidates offer loans as part of the payments for votes. An INQUIRER informant who drives a public transport vehicle said a relative availed himself of such a "loan" to finance corn planting in his farm.

Investment risks

Owing to huge "investments" they sink into the operation, candidates have to make sure the returns come on Election Day. Thus, it is no surprise that vote-buying operations come with threats and intimidation by armed goons.

Those who have received initial payments are closely watched if they are entertaining offers from rival camps. If so, punitive actions are taken.

In Ozamiz City, the phase-out of 10-peso bills has affected the market for councilor votes. Previously, P10 can fetch a non-exclusive vote for councilor. Now, P20 is the minimum price.

During balloting

- *Homework election:* This is possible if a candidate's camp has access to a supply of official ballots and election returns. The ballots are simply filled up in homes well before the day of elections. These are then dumped into the official ballot box at every precinct on election day.

Thus, the "winning" candidates are already determined even before the precincts open.

- *Substitution:* An operator for a certain candidate does the voting for all the others in the voters list. Or, he/she votes for those who do not show up in the precincts to cast their ballots.

In 2001, a 12-year-old boy bragged before journalists covering the Lanao del Sur polls that he had voted 10 times, showing his 10 fingers marked with indelible ink.

The ink marks were meant to show his politician-boss how many times he had voted. This would determine how much he would be paid.

Tale of the ink

- *Multiple voting:* Election Day is "harvest time" for those who have multiple registrations.

The Marawi native, who spoke to the INQUIRER about his multiple registration, said that on every Election Day, he had to change his looks and appearance at every precinct to avoid detection: first he would take away his moustache, then the beard goes, then he would shave clean his head. Finally, he would remove his denture.

For this operation, it is vital that the multiple voter's finger is not marked with indelible ink. If it is, the BEIs in the next precincts will be made to tolerate the mark.

In Lanao del Sur, a multiple voter earns at least P1,000 per vote; for those coming from farther places, P2,000 is the minimum price.

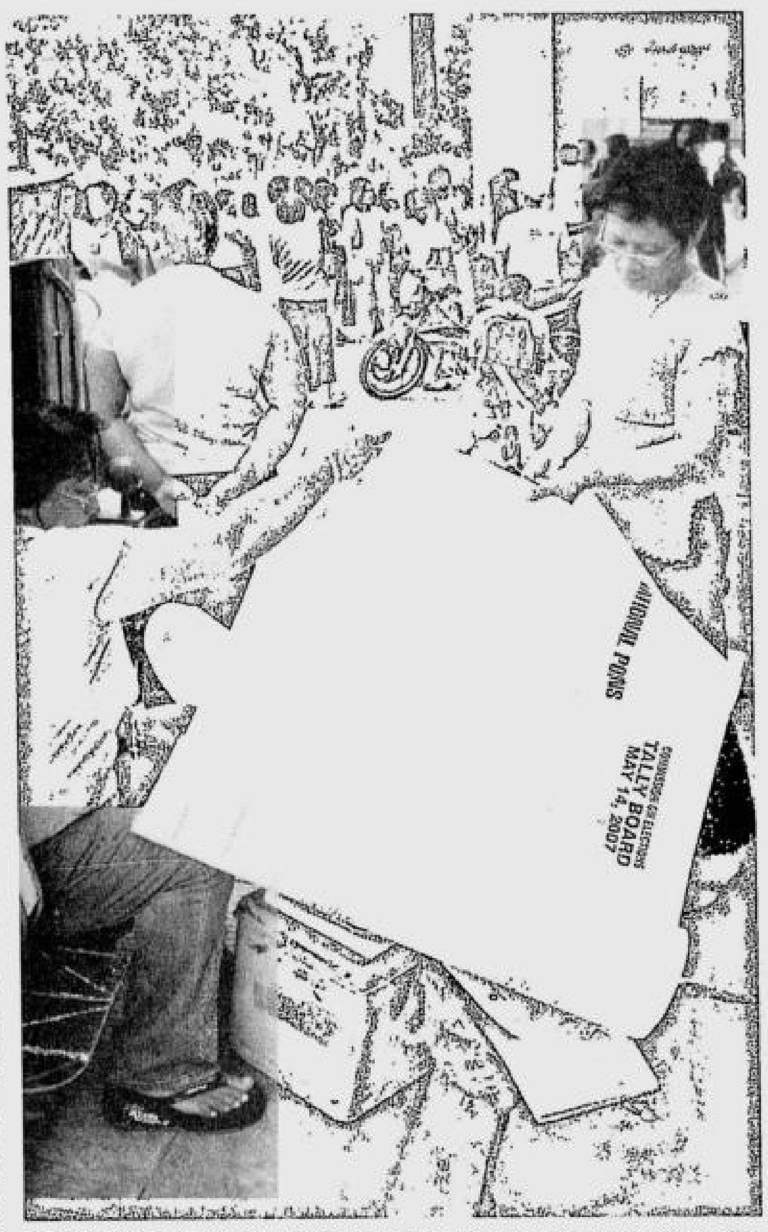
- *Pay-to-boycott.* This operation is undertaken to prevent voters from voting for a rival candidate.

This can start as early as the eve of Election Day, usually in the wee hours of morning. To be effective, this must come along with threats and intimidation, as well as misinformation and disinformation.

- *Ballot relay.* This operation requires access to a supply of official ballots. Even a single ballot can go a long way. First, the official ballot is filled with the candidate's name, then it is given to a paid voter.

The paid voter then "saves" the official ballot given him/her at the polling place by not using it. Instead, he drops the pre-filled ballot into the ballot box.

He/she then gives the ballot that has been "saved" to the political operator outside the precinct, and gets the final payment for his/her vote. The cycle then continues.



TEACHERS in Toril District in Davao City double-check election tally sheets and other paraphernalia to be used in today's political exercise.

BING GONZALES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Intimidating presence

- *Posting an intimidating presence.* Candidates assign armed goons outside and inside polling centers to guard against the turnaround of paid voters.

In many Lanao del Sur towns, political operators ask voters to show them their ballots before dropping these into the ballot box.

- *Deliberate misreading of ballots:* This is to make legitimate votes invalid.
- *Deliberate inaccuracy in toting up tallies:* Tallies are not totaled as counted.
- *Driving away watchers:* The BEIs who collude with dishonest politicians drive away the poll watchers of competing candidates.

Misreading?

- *Substitution:* This happens during the reading of the ballots; instead of reading the candidate's name written on the ballot, another name is read out.
- *Addendum votes:* This is done by filling blank spaces to accommodate favored candidates.

In Misamis Occidental in 2004, a teacher said that Comelec personnel gave teachers instructions to tell voters not to write anything on unused spaces or else the ballot would be invalidated. This gives way to addendum votes.

- *Nonpasting of paper seals:* Paper seals are provided to seal the folded election return (ER) and the envelope which contains it before these are transported to the municipal or city board of canvassers.

With the envelope unsealed, there is opportunity to change the election return with a home-worked one.

- *Ballot box snatching:* This is among the oldest form of machinations to distort the outcome of balloting. The snatched ballot box is emptied and replaced with a new set of ballots.

In several instances, the "snatching" is prearranged with "friendly" BEIs, who do the makeover. The camp that stages this operation should also have access to a supply of official election materials.

The canvass

- *Vote-shaving, vote-padding:* This is the much-touted *dagdag-bawas.* The tallies of candidates are changed without affecting the tally of total ballots cast. This is done by shaving the numbers of one candidate and adding to another. *With reports from Richel Umel, Julie S. Alipala, Aquiles Z. Zonio, Jeoffrey Maitem, Franklin Caliguid, Germelina Lacorte, Ramil Bangues, Judy Quiros and Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

TU, GO each claims 7 of its bets will win

From page A1

this is where the TU campaign thrives," Evardone said.

In a statement, Gabriel Claudio, President Macapagal-Arroyo's political adviser, said the administration was looking forward to gaining a new majority in the Senate courtesy of a decisive TU victory.

At the local level, administration allies were expected to sweep 80-90 percent of positions up for grabs, from governor to mayor to councilor.

The opposition has conceded it would be hard pressed to win even one-third of the 275 seats in the House of Representatives.

But a final poll by the independent Social Weather Stations, taken on May 2-4, showed the opposition winning six seats in the Senate against the administration with four and two independents.

Half the Senate is elected every three years to six-year terms. The 12 incumbents in the 24-seat Senate are equally divided between the administration, the opposition and independents.

Tamano said he based his forecast of GO winning seven or eight Senate seats on the results of surveys, scientific research and a "clean, issue-based" 90-day campaign across the country.

Repudiation of administration

Tamano said the GO's success in the elections would indicate the people's repudiation of the Arroyo administration, which, according to him, has failed to curb corruption, poverty and human rights violations.

"We wanted the voters to make their choices based on issues, not personalities. That was why our first four ads were focused on those issues," he said.

He said the opposition's "very solid stand" on corruption, poverty and human rights violations would spell victory for GO senatorial candidates.

GO is a coalition of opposition parties led by the United Opposition, itself a coalition of anti-Arroyo parties mostly identified with ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Other members include the Liberal Party, Nacionalista Party, Nationalist People's Coalition, Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Laban and Aksyon Demokratiko.

One vote against incumbent

Since February, GO has been playing its "Isang Boto Laban sa Nakaupo" TV political ads. The slogan summarized the anti-Arroyo thrust, apparently to win the protest votes to its side.

The campaign slogan also made clear the one issue the GO was harping on: President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Tamano said the ad had proven effective, as shown by the voters' preference for the GO over Ms Arroyo's TU in the preelection surveys.

Sotto has downplayed the surveys as a poor barometer of the pulse of the masses.

"I have yet to see a senatorial survey which accurately predicted the actual results," Sotto said, taking note of his high rankings in two senatorial elections despite faring poorly in the surveys.

Edgardo Angara, a TU senatorial candidate, said today's elections were "already more than half-won" by the administration because of its machinery.

Unopposed

He said TU was banking on the "Club of 56," the towns all over the country where all the opposition senatorial candidates lost in 2004; on the 267 proadministration city and town mayors who are running unopposed or facing token challengers; and on 199 TU congressional candidates already assured of victory because the opposition failed to put up serious contenders.

"This failure of the opposition to strengthen its local political fronts had weakened its chances in the senatorial race," Angara said.

TU has also laid claim to Mindanao because not a single political clan of influence in the region had cast its lot with GO.

Evardone said he believed that TU would give the opposition a run for its money in its bailiwicks, such as Metro Manila and Calabarzon (Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon), due to the support of well-entrenched governors and mayors allied with the administration.

Despite faring poorly in the surveys, Tessie Aquino-Oreta, a TU senatorial candidate, expressed confidence that political machinery would win the day for TU candidates.

"This was the reason I joined the administration," she said.

Even Jimmy Policarpio, a former campaign strategist of President Joseph Estrada, said he believed that TU would win the elections (six for TU, four for GO and two independents) because GO had only 21 [gubernatorial] candidates in 81 provinces.

"Our history shows that political machinery will always win over popularity," Policarpio said.

Sample ballots

Without local support, Policarpio said GO candidates had little chance of being placed on the sample ballot.

"Filipino voters on the average fill up between four and eight names on the ballot. The sample ballots help them fill up the rest of the blank lines. This is also where the command votes are put into place because most voters are spoon-fed whom they will vote for. Sample ballots are more powerful than the ads on TV especially for the lesser known candidates," he said.

In an interview before he underwent angioplasty, GO campaign manager Sergio Osmeña III said all the campaign efforts of the opposition would be for naught should the administration be allowed to steal the results.

"We really have to watch the counting," Osmeña said.

Tamano said the opposition, having learned its lesson in the 2004 presidential election, had set up "anticheating groups" in 3,000 barangays nationwide.

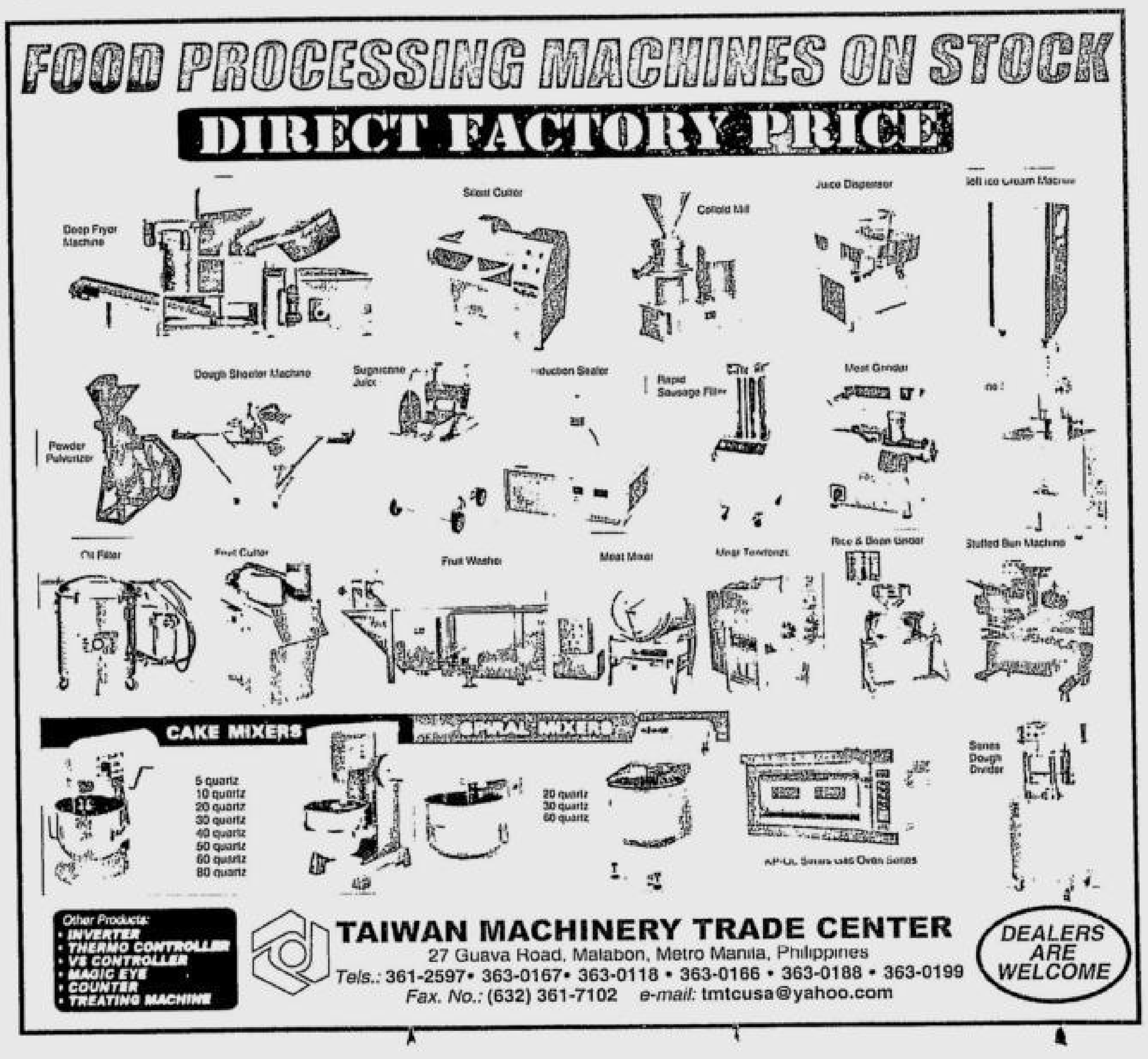
Analysts have warned that any major poll fraud may escalate into unrest and violence.

Manual counting

Counting, done manually at the precinct level, was expected to be completed by May 15 and results sent to the municipal and city levels for tallying.

Winners would be proclaimed 36 hours after the tallying at the municipal level, 48 hours at the city level and 72 hours at provincial and congressional levels.

Results of the senatorial elections were expected only after four weeks and could be further delayed by allegations of fraud. *With a report from Reuters*



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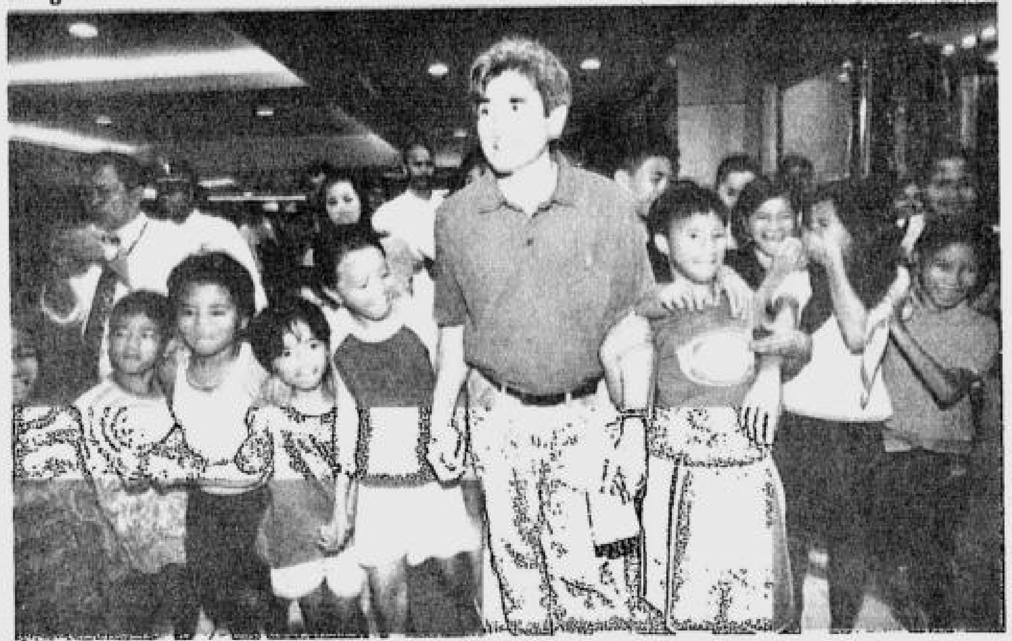
DEALERS ARE WELCOME

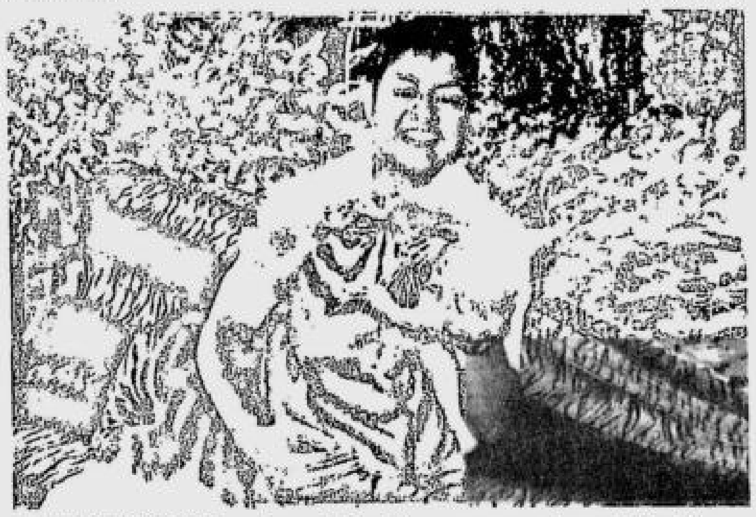
SILLY SEASON

MICHAEL Defensor poses for a souvenir picture with Filipino migrant workers in Hong Kong's downtown area. DANTE PERALTA/CONTRIBUTOR

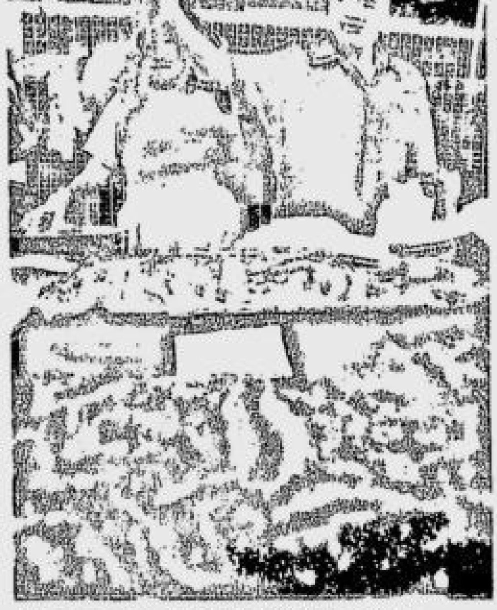
GENUINE Opposition candidates join their colleague, Antonio Trillanes, in a boodle fight during a visit to his detention center in Fort Bonifacio. REM ZAMORA



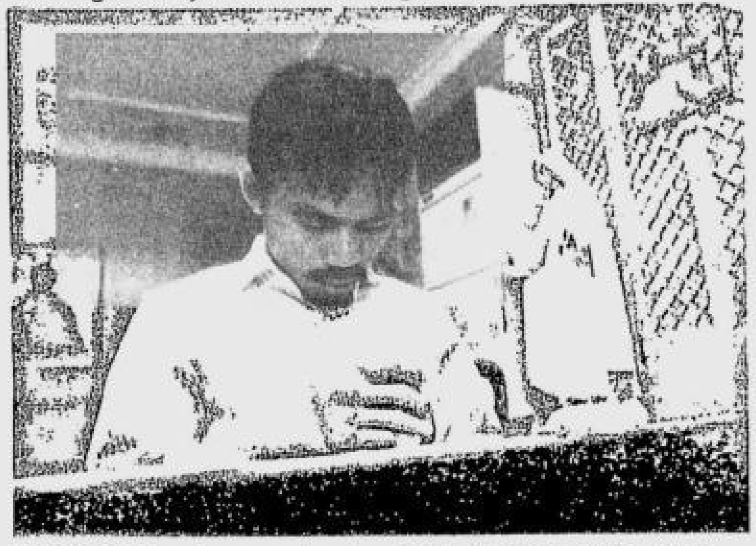
SUSPECTED mutiny leader Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan visits a mall in Mandaluyong City and mingles with youths not old enough to vote. JOAN BONDOC



REELECTIONIST Sen. Francis Pangilinan nurses a tiger at Zoobic Safari at the Subic Freeport. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

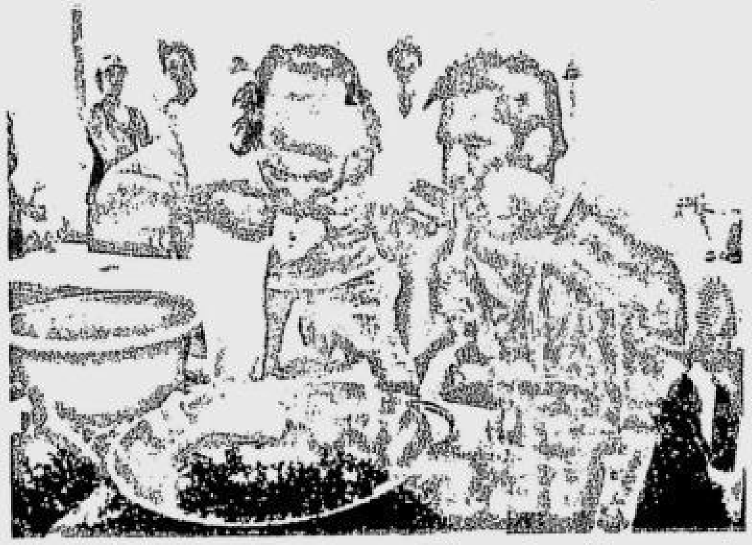


GO senatorial candidate Nikki Coseteng invades Farmers' Market in Quezon City. RYAN LIM



BOXING idol and congressional candidate Manny Pacquiao takes time out to pray at the St. Joseph's Chapel in Malacañang. LYN RILLON

REELECTIONIST Senators Ralph Recto and Joker Arroyo try the fried "tinapa" in Capas, Tarlac.



TEAM Unity's Tessie Aquino-Oreta and Vicente Sotto III eat mussels and oysters in Bacoor, Cavite. JOSEPH MUEGO

'Most corrupt' tag on RP clarified

From page A1

used extensively by the Genuine Opposition (GO) in its political ads during the campaign.

The story, which was run by other newspapers, was based on an article by Agence France-Presse on the PERC report. The INQUIRER also interviewed PERC managing director Robert Broadfoot for its banner story.

"I will try here to clarify the assertion attributed in some media reports that PERC said the Philippines is the 'No. 1 Most Corrupt Country in Asia,'" Broadfoot said in a May 11 letter to Constancia de Guzman, chair of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC).

"I can say categorically that we never made such an assertion. What I believe the media reports did was look at a graph we had on the cover of our corruption report without reading any of the text and jump to the wrong conclusion about what the graph represented," Broadfoot said.

PERC's clarification came on the eve of today's elections in which corruption had become one of the main issues that GO claimed would be a key factor for voting against President Macapagal-Arroyo's handpicked Team Unity senatorial candidates.

In a grading system with zero as the best possible score and 10 the worst, the Philippines got 9.40, worsening sharply from its grade of 7.80 last year, AFP said. It added that Indonesia was deemed Asia's most corrupt country in 2006, while Singapore and Hong Kong were seen as the least corrupt.

AFP yesterday referred the INQUIRER to its original story, which ran on March 13.

AFP said in its story: "'The Philippines has the distinction of being perceived in the worst light this year,' PERC said after polling almost 1,500 expatriate business executives in 13 Asian countries and territories across the region in January and February.

The lead paragraph of the AFP report read: "The Philippines is perceived by foreign businessmen as Asia's most corrupt economy, according to a survey Tuesday that also found other countries failing to tackle the problem."

Perception

Broadfoot explained that the grade given by PERC to each country did not rate the level of corruption between Asian countries "but how expatriates working in individual Asian countries perceived the variable of corruption was a factor influencing the environment in which they are working."

"Respondents provided scores only for the country in which they were working. This means that numbers are more useful for measuring how perceptions in any given country are changing over time, not how one country compares with other Asian countries. The different audiences have different biases," he said.

Broadfoot said that while the "score here (Philippines) was very bad in absolute terms, compared with earlier surveys we have done on the Philippines, and with perceptions held by expatriates in other Asian countries, this does not mean that absolute levels of corruption have worsened."

He said expatriates were just more focused on the problem of corruption in the public sector than they were before.

Of the 1,476 expatriate businessmen PERC polled in the region, more than 100 were based in the Philippines.

Broadfoot erred

Broadfoot also noted that the media had failed to report that respondents gave a favorable rating to the problem of corruption in the private sector, "which is not bad at all either in absolute terms or compared with perceptions in other Asian countries."

"This perception was generally not reflected at all in media reports and runs very counter to the generalized assertion that the Philippines is the most corrupt country in Asia," he said.

Broadfoot erred on this point. The INQUIRER said in its banner story that the perceived corruption in the private sector (a score of 4.15) was not as bad as that in the public sector (an average score of 9).

In the AFP report, PERC said the protracted corruption trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada "is an example of the problem and probably explains why respondents to our survey were so negative in their assessment" of the country.

"It [corruption] is bad and has been bad all along. People are just growing tired of the inaction and insincerity of leading officials when they promise to fight corruption," AFP said, quoting PERC.

In the INQUIRER interview, Broadfoot said it might be inappropriate to compare the Philippine' corruption rating with those of other Asia countries.

In his letter, Broadfoot said the issue of corruption "can be abused by people for their own political ends."

"Corruption is also something that can and is being politicized in ways that are not particularly helpful to the country's development but only serve to push the political agendas of those seizing upon the topic in a particular way," he said.

Broadfoot said PERC did not want to "downplay either the magnitude of the problem of corruption in the Philippines or its impact on the country's economic and social development."

Public relations

He said it was important to combat corruption not only on the substantive level but also on the public relations level.

De Guzman said Broadfoot's letter should put an end to the misinformation peddled by the opposition that the country was the most corrupt country in Asia.

"The damage has been done but nothing is really too late. Mr. Broadfoot had clarified the issue verbally before but we convinced him to put it down in writing so the people would not believe the wrong report," said De Guzman.

"We all know there is a corruption problem in our country but all this black propaganda that we are the worst in Asia is only setting back our efforts to solve the problem," the PAGC chair said.

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GMA duplicating Marcos poll machine

From page A1

reaucratic apparatus of control much like President Ferdinand Marcos did when he ran for reelection in 1969.

The midterm elections are being held against the background of death squad executions that have claimed hundreds of lives since 2001, political repression and human rights violations, sluggish economic growth and rock-bottom public opinion disapproval ratings on Ms Arroyo's performance.

These issues loom large in the back of voters' minds as they fill in their ballots.

What prevents this election from being a straightforward referendum on Ms Arroyo's record is that she is not up for reelection today, her first three years being a windfall from the extra-constitutional People Power II that deposed Joseph Estrada.

Thus, we are not on the crossroads of change for a renewal of political leadership.

This is what makes this election odd and so frustrating. Filipinos are locked, by this electoral anomaly, in a situation where they have to live with Ms Arroyo, whether they like it or not, until 2010.

Trap of the status quo

Unlike the May 6 presidential election in France, which confronted the French people with a clear choice in deciding their political and social destiny between the socialist and the neo-Gaullist conservative visions of restoring their country's glory, Filipinos face a no-change election today.

If election is about change or renewal, either at the top or at the level of policy, today's election locks us into the trap that retains the status quo.

This ambiguity helps explain why the election is so unexciting, so devoid of high expectations for change, and why the only thing exciting about it is the overheating of rivalries in the local elections, which have claimed the lives of more than 100 political partisans.

Filipinos' dilemma

The Economist magazine highlighted the most compelling and immediate issues and dilemma facing Filipinos in an article titled, "Violence mars the run-up to mid-term elections."

The article said: "Despite the appallingly high levels of voters' intimidation, the results of the mid-term elections ... seem fairly certain: supporters of the President ... are expected to retain control of the lower house of parliament, while the upper house—which wants to impeach Ms Macapagal-Arroyo—will remain a bastion of the opposition."

This result, said the article, "could perpetuate the deadlock between the two houses, prolonging the government's policy paralysis and adding to the disillusionment of voters ... Moreover, overt violence is only the most egregious form of electoral misbehavior—repeat voting, intimidation and vote-buying are also rampant."

Fears of cheating

Few Philippine elections have heightened fears of massive cheating since the 1949 presidential election when the "birds and the bees voted" in Lanao province, in Mindanao, as much as the 2007 elections have.

This is so because the administration has mobilized the total machinery of the ruling political coalition (Lakas-CMD party), and the military, police and the Department of Justice as well as the government's patronage resources behind its all-out campaign to win control of the Senate and retain its majority in the House of Representatives.

In 1969, Marcos consolidated his political apparatus and broadened his patronage base. His Nacionalista Party machine was in control down to the grass-roots. For four years, Marcos carried out the most extensive infrastructure program, financed by deficit spending and foreign borrowing, ever launched by any previous administration.

Marcos machine

By 1969, Marcos had built more roads, bridges, irrigation systems and school houses than any other administration since 1945. His machine was poised to crush his Liberal Party presidential opponent, Sen. Sergio Osmeña Jr.

But Marcos wanted to do more than win the election. His ambition to dominate knew no bounds. He wanted to match the landslide of Ramon Magsaysay in 1953. He did not need to cheat.

Ms Arroyo has attempted to duplicate the Marcos reelection machine. From all indications, she has nearly succeeded.

Marcos went on to rout Osmeña and the Liberal Party in 1969. That election was marred by widespread charges of cheating and vote-buying and unbridled election spending on infrastructure development.

Price of victory

The consequences of these excesses were immediately explosive after the election.

The election profligacy and deficit spending fueled the inflation rate up to 17 percent in 1970, more than three times the average annual inflation rate of 4.5 percent for the 1960s. Public unrest over high prices swiftly followed.

The scale of the Osmeña defeat was unprecedented. He won in only one province, Pampanga.

The sweep was hard to believe. It reinforced allegations of widespread cheating and vote-buying. The unrest stemming from these two causes fanned the burgeoning student revolt of the late 1960s feeding on social discontent.

The unrest exploded in January 1970, when student demonstrators attacked Marcos and his wife Imelda on the way out of Congress after he had delivered his State of the Nation Address. The attack inaugurated an era of political turbulence that set the stage for martial law.

The temptation for Ms Arroyo to emulate the Marcos overkill with the election apparatus she has built to win the election is hard to resist. The elements of a blow-up exist.

Inquirer.net offers election 'liveblogging'

From page A1

http://inquirer.net/ or at http://www.inquirer.net/eleksyon2007/

Mobile phone users can subscribe to the alerts by sending ON EXTRA BREAKING to 2207 (for Globe subscribers) and 386 (for Smart subscribers).

The running account was used during the impeachment trial of then President Joseph Estrada and his eventual ouster in 2001, the Oakwood mutiny in 2003, the elections in 2004 and other big breaking news.

This year, readers will also be able to comment on the coverage through a link to Inquirer.net's Eleksyon 2007 blog (http://inquirerbloggers.net/eleksyon2007/).

The running account and text alerts join the interactive Election Map, Sample Ballot and Voter's Guide in the offerings of Inquirer.net's Eleksyon 2007 special site (http://www.inquirer.net/eleksyon2007/).

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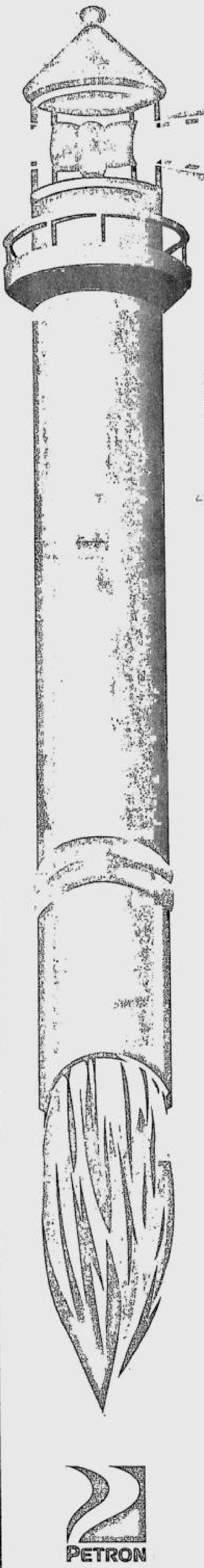

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Painting & Photography Competition

This year's theme, "ALAY SA PALATANDAANG BAYAN," features landmarks such as lighthouses, bridges, monuments, parks, town halls and other historic places that have existed for over 50 years. ArtPetron, the much awaited annual art competition, invites all talented students enrolled in a regular university or college course or in a museum-based tutorial art class to submit their oil and watercolor artworks or black & white photos with this theme.

A nation is its own cultural and historical landmark. This year, ArtPetron 7 features heritage structures that are testimonials to our shared Spanish, American, Chinese, and Malay past. Be a witness to these majestic sights, images or edifices that exemplify the Philippines' cultural pride.

The painting/photography competition is open to all Filipino college students and students of a tutorial or museum-based painting or photography class. Age bracket of participants is limited to 15-28 years old only.

Application forms are available at all colleges, universities, participating Petron Service Centers, bulk plants and offices nationwide, or at the Project Secretariat c/o Studio 5 Designs, 28 Paseo de Roxas corner Jupiter St., Bel-Air Village, Makati City. Telephone numbers are 8909318 or 8953975. A downloadable application form is available at our website: www.artpetron.com.

Watercolor/Water-based Media
- The surface to be used for this category must be watercolor paper or illustration board.
- The size of the artwork must not be more than 4 ft. x 4 ft. (unframed).

Oil/Acrylic
- The surface to be used for this category must either be canvas, canvas paper or wood.
- The size of the artwork must not be more than 4 ft. x 4 ft. (uframed).

Black and White Photography
- The size of the artwork must not be smaller than 8 in. x 10 in. and must not exceed 10 in. x 15 in. (unframed).
- All entries must be original and must have been photographed after January 31, 2007. They must not have been previously exhibited or awarded a prize in another contest, corrected, or manipulated in any post production activity. Entrants must declare the type of camera used. Digital photography is allowed. Filters may be used.

Submit entries to Petron bulk plants (deadline is July 26, 2007); or to the Project Secretariat c/o Studio 5 Designs (deadline is Aug. 2, 2007). Entries sent to the Project Secretariat via the standard registered package or by courier must be postmarked July 26, 2007.

A total of Php690,000 cash prizes await talented winners:

- Six (6) first prize winners (three (3) from each Painting Category) will receive Php50,000 and a trophy made by National Artist and Chairman of the Art Petron Board of Judges Napoleon V. Abueva.
- Six (6) runners-up (three (3) from each Painting Category) will receive Php20,000 each and an ArtPetron trophy.
- The Photography Category will have six (6) first prize winners who will receive Php30,000 each and an ArtPetron trophy.
- Six (6) runners-up will receive Php15,000 each and an ArtPetron trophy.

For full details and contest forms, please go to your nearest Petron service station or you may call the office of the Project Secretariat. A downloadable application form is available at **www.artpetron.com.**

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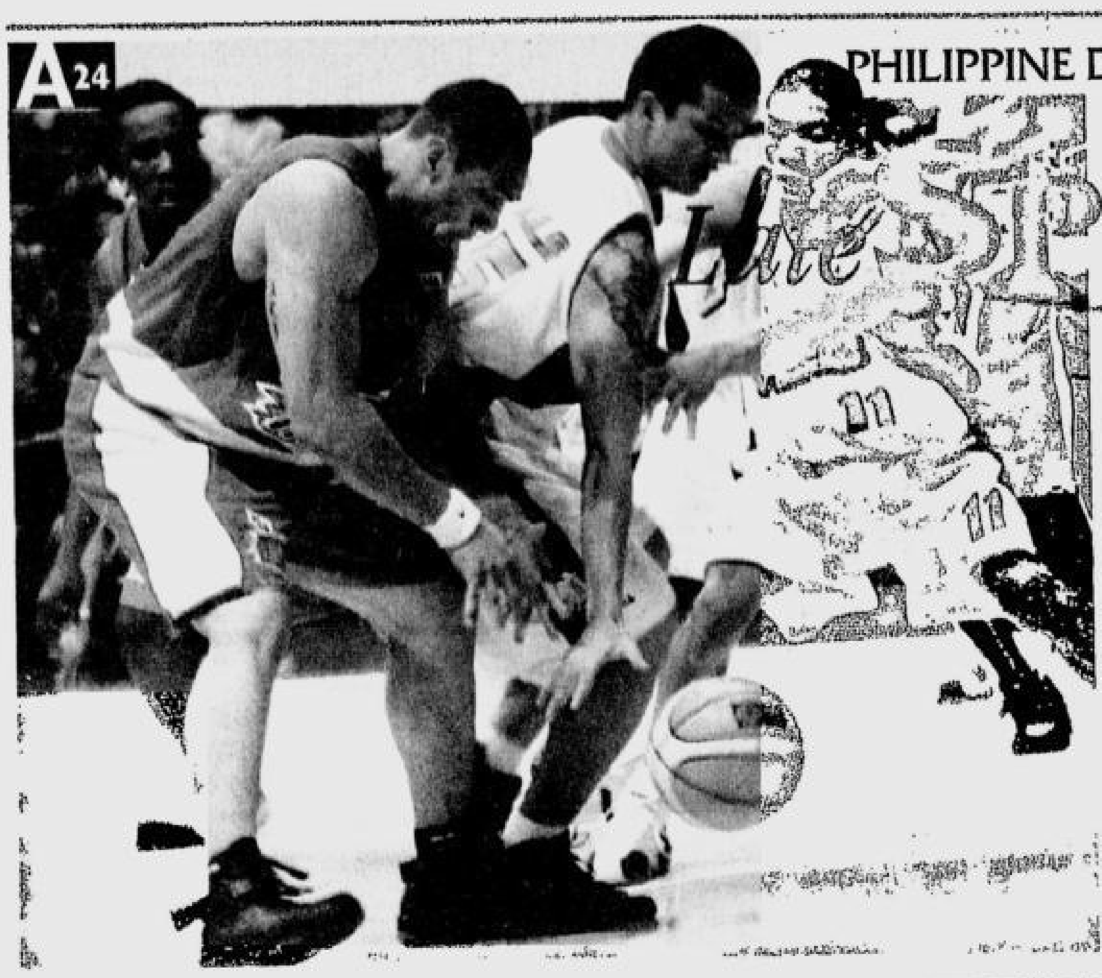

COCA-COLA'S Ali Peek (left) gets into a loose-ball scramble with Alaska enforcers John Ferriols (center) and Eddie Laure while the Tigers' import, Jeff Varem, looks on.

RYAN LIM

Giants bury Gin Kings; Tigers roar

GAMES WEDNESDAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:35 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs. Welcoat
7:20 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs. Air21

By Musong R. Castillo

IT WAS JUST TOO DEEP A hole to climb out of.

Purefoods buried league-leading Barangay Ginebra by 25 points at the half and then showed tremendous character down the stretch to hammer out a 117-105 victory that put the Tender Juicy Giants back on track in the PBA Fiesta Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Three players scored in the 30s for the Giants who finally prevailed after three close shaves, improved to 5-10 in the process, and stayed well within the wild-card phase range.

Ginebra took a second straight loss—its first losing slide in the tournament—but still kept itself in the lead after Alaska suffered a meltdown in the fourth period earlier to go down, 90-94, against Coca-Cola.

The Gin Kings dropped to 10-4, still a win up on idle second-placer Air21 as the race for the top two berths in the elimination round got muddled up some more with the Aces falling to 9-5.

Defending champion Red Bull moved into a tie with Alaska and with still a strong chance for an automatic semifinal berth.

Peter June Simon tossed in 31 points, 23 in the first half when the Giants broke away. Purefoods also got 30 each from James Yap and import Marquin Chandler in snapping a three-game losing streak.

"I've never seen that kind of scoring in a long while," Purefoods' Ryan Gregorio said. "We badly needed this win because it gave us some breathing room from 10th spot. This win speaks highly of the character of this team."

Ginebra, which came into the game smarting from a 97-91 loss to Alaska that snapped a six-game winning streak on Friday, doggedly tried to come back from a 71-46 deficit behind Ronald Tubid and Rod Nealy.

The Kings chopped that lead down to four at 94-98 before Yap countered' with a three-point play off Billy Mamaril.

Meanwhile, the Tigers held the Aces to three points up until the halfway stage of the payoff frame and nibbled away at a 14-point third-quarter deficit before outsteadying Alaska in the stretch to rise to 6-8 overall.

William Antonio hit two key triples in the fourth and Jeff Varem was steady from the stripe, aside from being solid underneath, as the Tigers snapped Alaska's two-game run.

Alaska came into the game the solid favorite and played like one until the time the Aces really needed to win.

Baskets came in trickles for Alaska when winning time came with Rosell Ellis' layup—just the team's ninth point after close to nine minutes—putting the Aces ahead for the last time at 83-81.

Varem, the former Chicago Bull in the NBA, had a free throw and then completed a three-point play off Sonny Thoss that made it 87-83, with 1:44 to go.

He finished with 22 points, including a 12-of-15 clip from the stripe, and 18 rebounds, four steals and two swats. The victory was only the second for Vareem since replacing Anthony Johnson as import five games ago.

Alaska was so lethargic in the fourth period after earlier dominating the game and leading by as many as 15 in the second quarter.

"I just wanted to see how we would respond as a team (after trailing big early)," Coca-Cola coach Binky Favis said. "I just told them (after the third quarter) to keep on playing."

The scores:

First Game

COCA-COLA 94—Varem 22, Peek 19, Cabagnot 18, Arigo 18, Antonio 11, Calimag 4, Tolomia 2, Yeo 0, Avenido 0.

ALASKA 90—Ellis 23, Miller 13, Cariaso 13, Belasco 13, Thoss 12, Ferriols 4, Cortez 4, Hugnatan 3, Singson 3, Laure 2.

Quarters: 21-33, 38-52, 61-74, 94-90

Second Game

PUREFOODS 117—Simon 31, Chandler 30, J. Yap 30, R. Yap 9, Salvador 8, Castillo 4, Yee 3, Evangelista 2.

BARANGAY GINEBRA 105—Nealy 32, Tubid 30, Macapagal 11, Salvacion 9, chia 7, Mamaril 6, Echavez 3, Santos 3, Helper 2, Seigle 2.

Quarters: 34-24, 71-46, 92-81, 117-105

More Sports stories on A33 to 40

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Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

Navotas mayor slams black propaganda

By Nancy C. Carvajal

NAVOTAS MAYOR TOBIAS "TOBY" TIANGCO, who is running for reelection, yesterday blamed his opponent for the recent publication of fake copies of two tabloids which carried negative reports against him.

"This is an act of desperation by my opponent because I am leading the race," Tiangco told the INQUIRER over the phone.

The fake publications bore the mastheads of the tabloids "Bulgar" and "Pilipino Star Ngayon." Both bore the date "Lunes (Monday), Mayo (May) 11, 2007, although May 11 was a Friday.

The "Bulgar" headline read: "Toby T. nagsa-shabu (shabu user)." According to the story, Tiangco tested positive for methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu), based on the results of a drug test conducted by a drug laboratory in Makati City recently.

The Pilipino Star banner story, on the other hand, said that the Office of the Ombudsman has disqualified the mayor for his illegal suspension of a barangay leader in 2005.

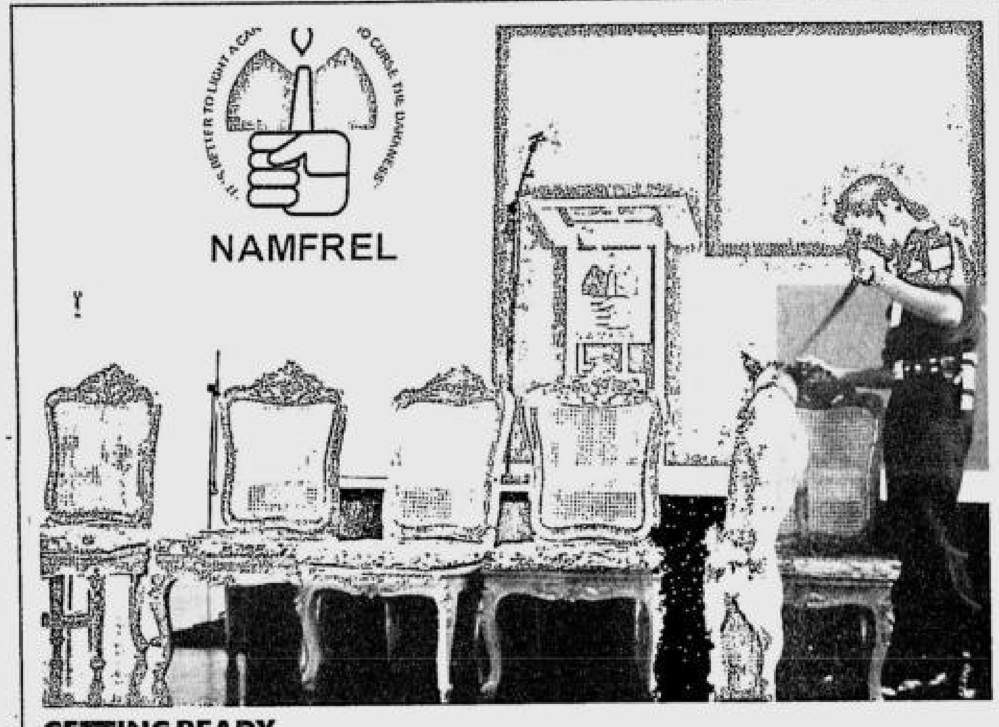
Both stories carried no bylines.

According to Tiangco, the fake tabloids were distributed in the municipality by motorcycle-riding men.

Meanwhile, the spokesperson of Rep. Federico "Ricky" Sandoval, who is running against Tiangco for mayor, denied that the former was behind the publication of the fake tabloids.

"The congressman did not have anything to do with that but it is understandable that he is the immediate suspect because he is the mayor's only opponent for the post," Alex Rosete said in a phone interview.

Tiangco said he is not worried about the circulation of the fake tabloids. "I am already preparing for my victory party," he added.



GETTING READY
A bomb-sniffing dog checks out the headquarters of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections at La Salle Greenhills in Ortigas. Namfrel has been accredited by the Commission on Elections to conduct a quick count of the votes cast in today's national and local elections.
RUDY ESPERAS

Poster-free Metro eyed by Friday

By DJ Yap

LIKE THE END OF A "BAD DREAM," METRO Manila should be rid of all reminders of today's elections by Friday—from posters pasted on walls, to streamers strung up on posts and sample ballots littering the streets.

This, according to Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando, who set the deadline for the agency's personnel to rid the streets of all campaign materials.

"In one week, MMDA teams will remove all campaign posters, streamers and sample ballots in the streets of Metro Manila," Fernando said in his regular Sunday program, "MMDA sa GMA," on dzBB.

"We need to erase all signs of the elections so they become just memories of lost dreams," he joked, alluding to losing candidates.

He also called on candidates to help remove their own campaign materials. "Let's help each other clean up Metro Manila," Fernando said.

Posters and other campaign paraphernalia have proliferated throughout the metropolis despite a Commission on Elections order banning the posting of election materials outside common poster areas.

The MMDA official observed that removing campaign materials this year would be an easier task compared to previous years "with the changing of technology and materials."

Fernando noted that more and more politicians are using tarpaulin in making their streamers and banners.

"With tarpaulins, our men don't have a hard time taking them down. They just have to drag and pull" unlike paper posters which are pasted on walls, he said.

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Meningo case halts hospital operations

Marikina medical facility reopens after nine hours

By Kristine L. Alave

THE AMANG RODRIGUEZ Medical Center in Marikina City was forced to temporarily stop its operations last week after a 3-year old boy was admitted for meningococcemia on May 5, officials reported only yesterday.

According to city health officials and hospital officers, the medical center had to halt operations for nine hours starting at 5 p.m. last Saturday to disinfect the emergency room twice, a standard operating procedure in such cases. The facility resumed operations at about 2 a.m. the following day.

"We had to temporarily close the area to disinfect and fumigate," Dr. Ricardo Lustre, the hospital director said.

Patients and medical workers who came in contact with the 3-year-old boy had to undergo a checkup and take prophylactics, he added.

Lustre said the boy, who reportedly came from Barangay San Roque, was initially treated for dehydration and fever.

When he suffered rashes a few hours after he was admitted into the hospital, he was then given another test to determine if he had meningococcemia. The boy tested positive and was subsequently transferred to San Lazaro Hospital in Manila.

Meningococcemia is a disease caused by the Neisseria meningitidis bacteria, according to the website of the Department of Health.

"The disease is characterized by the sudden onset of high grade fever lasting for 24 hours. Other signs and symptoms are rashes appearing within 24 hours after the onset of fever and headache, nausea and vomiting," the website said.

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From Araceli Estose, 28, Manila: "The illegal vendors occupying the walkway linking the Light Rail Transit Line 1 to the Metro Rail Transit 3 are increasing in numbers. There are even vendors on the overpass at the LRT Edsa station. I have called the attention of MRT officials to this, but they say they are undermanned and that this is under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority. The presence of these illegal vendors seriously impede the flow of pedestrian traffic especially during rush hour. Help!"

METRO
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Dangerous crossing at Green Meadows

IT HAS become increasingly dangerous for us pedestrians to cross C-5 Road to Gate 5 in Green Meadows because motorists ignore traffic rules. What should we do?

GOMER OFALLA, 36, Green Meadows Village 1

Sagging telephone cable

DIGITEL'S telephone cable has been sagging way too low than normal for more than a month now in our area. This has been already reported to the Digitel office, but unfortunately, there is still no action on their part.

JUANCHO JOSE, 39, Village East Executive Homes, Cainta, Rizal

C-5 not motorist-friendly

C-5 IS NOT friendly for those unfamiliar with the thoroughfare especially after dark. The road signs are small, particularly in the turnoffs (e.g. Market-Market) and even smaller after the turnoffs (e.g. C-5 vs Market-Market). You need to drive right up to the sign to know whether or not you are leaving through the right exit (e.g. to Naia). By then it's too late and dangerous to backtrack. Worst of all, the signs are not lighted!

FE ESPINO, 47, Parañaque City

Irresponsible jeepney drivers

JEEPNEYS on their way to Marikina cause traffic problems at the C-5 underpass, especially in the morning. They must be fined for not obeying traffic rules. Making a U-turn under the bridge and loading and unloading passengers at designated spots should be strictly implemented.

JEN, 38, Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City

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Tel. Nos. 522-00-00; 551-22-00 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
for the
CREDIT RISK ENGINE SYSTEM (CRES) PROJECT

The *Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP)* is conducting a public bidding for the procurement of a credit risk modeling and rating/scoring solution for the CRES Project.

The primary purpose of this turn-key project is the acquisition of an automated, centralized, fully integrated, "commercial-off-the shelf" credit risk modeling and rating/scoring solution of the Bank, which includes the following components:

- Software application, licenses and other software components (DBMS; APIs; connectors; middleware; etc.)
- Various technical and development tools

Furthermore, the CRES solution provider shall also be responsible for the Extract-Transform-Load (ETL) process, that is, the extraction of all required data from the different source systems, data transformation and data loading to the target database(s). The solution provider shall also be responsible for the following requisite activities: source to target mapping, data availability and quality assessment, design and development of the ETL routines and system integration testing of the ETL routines. The solution provider has the option to use the Bank's existing ETL tool - Informatica PowerCenter 7.1.2 to facilitate the ETL process.

The proposed system should be compliant to Basel II and other regulatory requirements of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

To ensure the highest degree of fit of the CRES solution to the Bank's requirements, and to effectively manage change, the project scope likewise covers all the requisite software customizations, as well as change management activities like change management planning and communication, the review of *"As Is"* processes, business process simplification and improvement, the documentation and training on the *"To Be"* processes, organizational change assessment, and assistance in the implementation of the required organizational and process changes.

The proposed solution should be implemented in Production within a maximum of twelve (12) months from the award of the contract.

The project must take into account all related implementation activities and processes such as data conversion/migration, systems integration, project management, system development lifecycle, change management, technology transfer (training and documentation), and maintenance and support. Likewise, the solution provider is expected to conduct a post-implementation review at least ninety (90) days, but not to exceed one hundred twenty (120) days, after the system has been implemented in Production, to assess the project performance and the effectiveness of the system.

This is a procurement for Consulting Services and subject to Public Bidding and Quality-Cost Based Evaluation (85% Technical and 15% Financial).

Interested parties may secure the *Eligibility and Short-listing Requirements, **upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) and upon signing of a Confidentiality Agreement***, from ***07 - 18 May 2007***, during regular office hours (between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.), from:

THE SECRETARIAT
Information Technology – Bids and Awards Committee (IT-BAC)
LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
16th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza
M.H. del Pilar corner J. Quintos Streets, Malate, 1004 Manila, Philippines
Telephone : +63 2 405-7123
Fax Number : +63 2 528-8588
Contact Person : Alan V. Bornas
Head – Technology Management Group
Email Address : itbac@mail.landbank.com

The Letter of Intent, the accomplished *Evaluation Forms (List of Projects* and *Project Team Information and Requirements Checklist) for Short-listing* and the rest of the *Eligibility Requirements* must be submitted by hand not later than ***01 June 2007, 3:00 p.m.*** to the aforementioned address. Only parties who pass the Eligibility Check shall be allowed to participate in the bidding procedure.

The IT-BAC shall draw up a short-list of firms from those who have been determined as eligible and the number of short-listed firms shall not exceed five (5), in accordance with the following criteria:

- Gartner's Evaluation
- Fit to Functional and Non-Functional and Other Requirements
- Implementation Methodology
- Vendor Experience, Expertise and Capability
- Personnel Qualifications
- Support Base

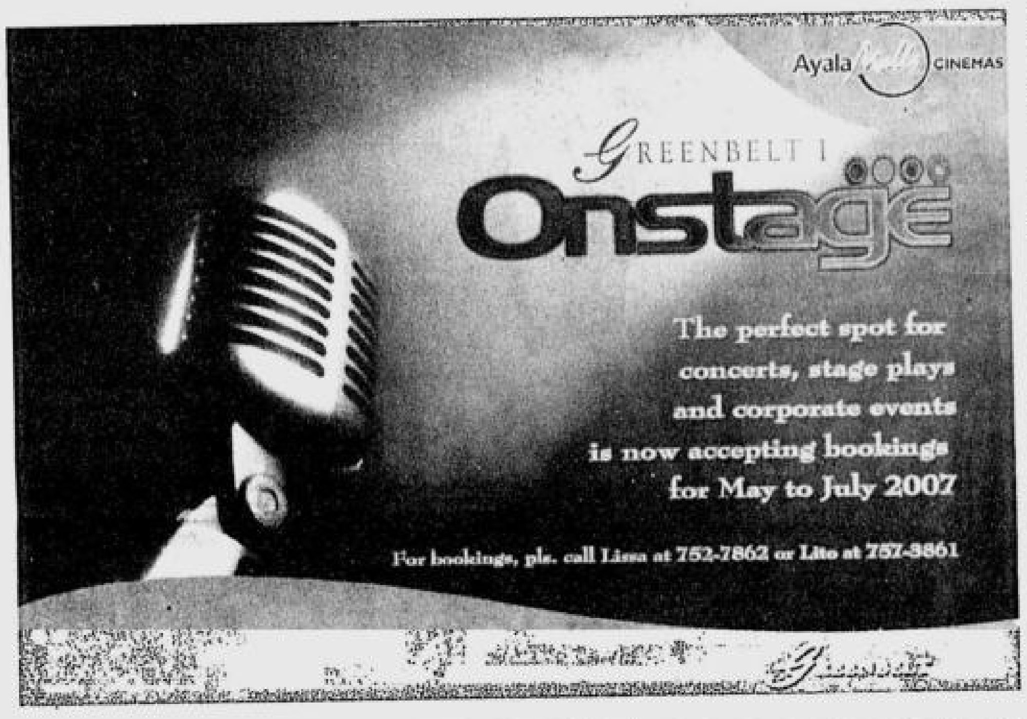
The short-listed bidders, upon receipt of formal notice, may secure the *Bidding Documents (e.g. Request For Proposal, etc.) **upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Seventeen Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P17,500.00)*** from ***18 to 20 June 2007***. For all qualified parties, the *Pre-Bid Conference* shall be held on ***25 June 2007 (Monday), 10:00 a.m.***, at the aforementioned address.

The *Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)* is ***Forty-five Million Pesos (Php 45,000,000.00)*, inclusive of all taxes and three (3) years maintenance**, which shall be sourced from the funds of Land Bank of the Philippines. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening of the financial proposals.

LBP reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the Eligibility requirements and to this invitation. LBP further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) **JOSE C. NOGRALES**
Chairman, IT-BAC

(PDI – May 7 & 14, 2007)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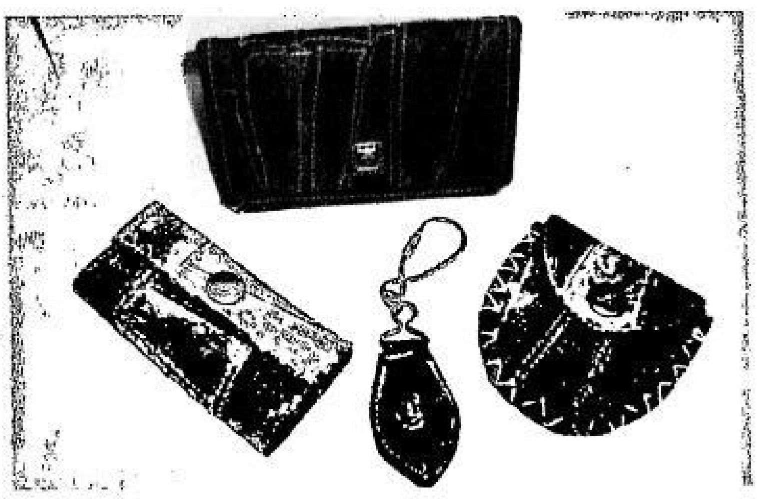
MORE WAYS TO SKIN THE 'PEST'

Marikina's 'janitor': Not just another fish story

By Kristine L. Alave

MARIKINA City Science High School students (from left) Aileen Junio, Arvin de Guzman and Richmae Gillera (right) came up with the idea of making products out of dried janitor fish skin. The trio and their teacher-coach Rowena Sanchez won the first prize in the Intel Science Fair held earlier this year. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



SOME of the products made from janitor skin: A coin purse, a wallet, billfold and a key chain.

MARIKINA, THE COUNTRY'S shoe capital, may soon be using janitor fish skin as accent for footwear and other products, if not as an alternative to alligator and snake skin.

Still plagued by the proliferation of janitor fish in the Marikina River, the city government has launched a campaign to get rid of the "pest" which multiplies very quickly, feeds on algae and deprives other fish of nutrients.

Councilor Ferdie Marco, head of "Oplan Alis Janitor Fish," said he and other city officials were considering using a process developed by students for making different products out of the fish's skin.

In February, Richmae Gillera, Aileen Junio and Arvin de Guzman, senior students of the Marikina City Science High School, won first prize in the Intel Science Fair (life science category) held in Tagaytay City.

The students made wallets, purses, watch straps, billfold and key chains using skin from the belly of the fish. Their work was part of a school project that encouraged them to find a use for the creature which is also called sucker mouth fish.

According to Rowena Sanchez, the students' coach and teacher, the project started in 2006 but the process was only refined this year when the students decided to use only skin from the fish's belly.

After collecting the pieces of skin, these are cooked and then go through a tanning process, Sanchez said.

The pieces are later sewn together to make a larger piece before these are dyed, cut and embellished, she added.

Sanchez said the fish's skin has spots and patterns like those of alligators and snakes which are prized for their unique patterns and texture. According to her, the fish skin can be used as accents in Marikina-made leather shoes and accessories.

"I was amazed that this could be done," Marco told the INQUIRER over the phone. The end product, he said, has the feel and thickness of leather. He added, "This has great potential but we need the process to be more efficient."

Marco said the city government was eager to turn the project into a large-scale livelihood program.

At the moment, they are looking into the possibility of opening a store that would sell exclusively Marikina-made merchandise, including janitor skin products as souvenir items, he added.

Exporters have also been invited to look at the products, Marco said.

Of all the experiments and suggestions involving janitor fish, the students' project seemed the most feasible, Marco noted. "This is quite easy, we just need to see (how much it would) cost."

Last year, a Marikina high school student extracted oil from janitor fish that could also be used as bio-fuel for motor vehicles.

Raymond Joseph Amurao won third place in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Indiana, United States for his project.

Marco said they were still testing the fuel and they would need a certificate from the Department of Energy before they could sell it to the public.

Amurao has also experimented on the use of janitor fish bones as a water purifier.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources earlier suggested the use of janitor fish for the production of fishmeal. But Marco said the idea was dropped because dried janitor fish has a horrible smell.

The Marikina City government has been grappling with the janitor fish problem since 2002.

The fish digs holes in pond dikes and river embankments for its nest, eroding soil in the riverbanks. Although edible and harmless to humans, Marikina residents do not want to eat it because of its seemingly dirty habitat.

City officials said the janitor fish in the river could have escaped from nearby Laguna de Bay where some fishermen used to breed it for the aquarium industry.

DID YOU KNOW

AS OF MARCH 30, there were over 45 million registered voters in the Philippines, 13 percent of them (5.7 million) in the National Capital Region. Southern Tagalog Region has the biggest number of voters (seven million), while Cordillera Autonomous Region has the fewest, with less than 800,000 registered voters.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

METROBRIEFS

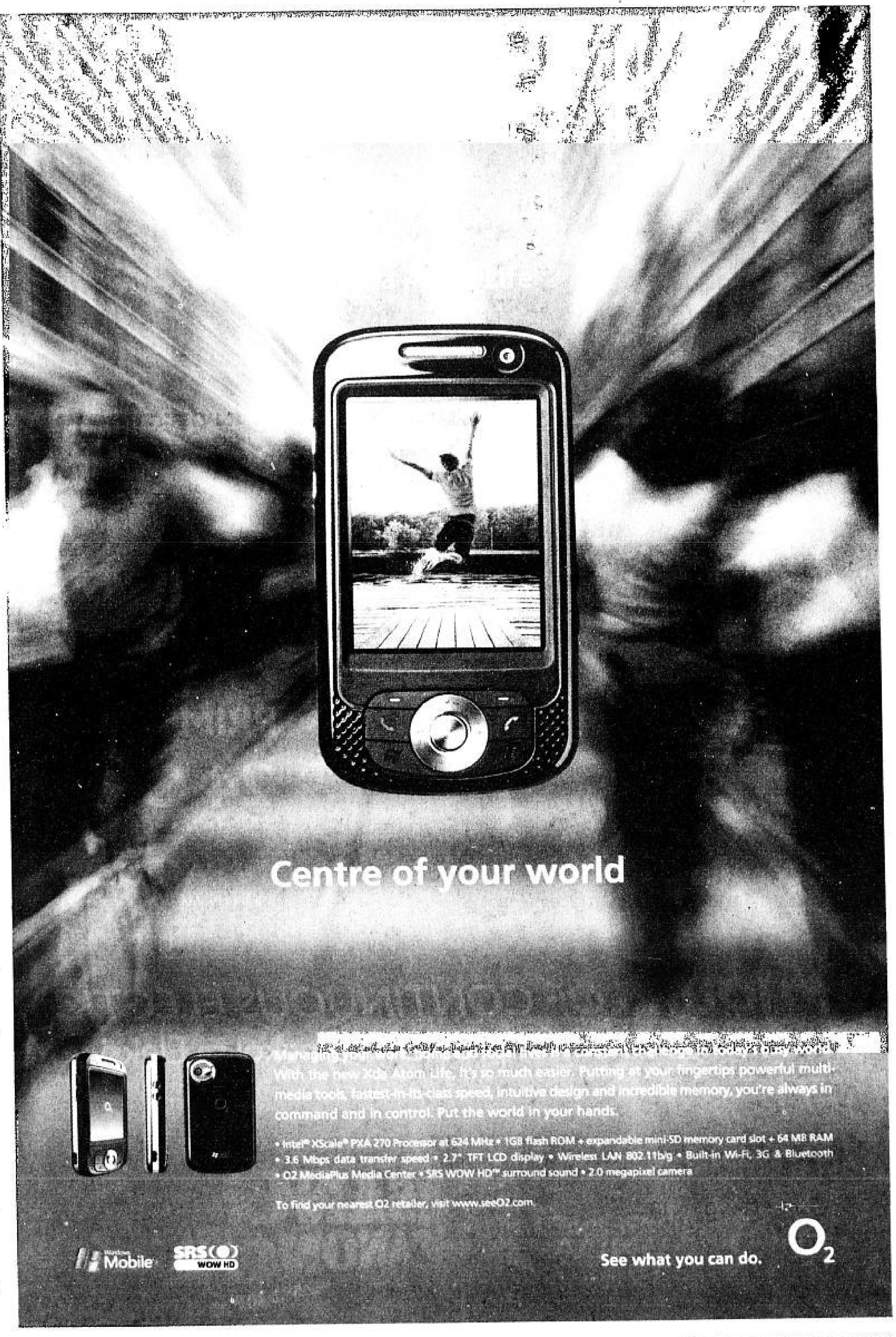
Police reiterate warning on liquor ban

THE EASTERN Police District warned owners of stores and other establishments against selling alcoholic drinks in line with the liquor ban imposed by the Commission on Elections yesterday and today. In an interview, EPD operations chief Supt. Cornelio Barrios said sellers and buyers who violate the ban face arrest. "We are concentrating on doubling police visibility, checkpoints and monitoring the liquor ban," he said. He added that policemen would patrol the neighborhoods not only to increase police visibility but also to apprehend liquor ban violators. Barrios added that all measures would be implemented to reduce election-related violence in the eastern part of Metro Manila. Only five-star hotels and beverage firms like San Miguel Corp. are exempted from the liquor ban. Violators face imprisonment of not less than one year to not more than six years. They will also be disqualified from holding public office and deprived of their right to vote. Last Friday, the EPD deployed over 150 troops to the cities of Marikina and Pasig to augment existing forces in the two areas. The entire police force is on red alert for today's elections.

Kristine L. Alave

Outstanding Girl Scout troops to be honored

THE GIRL Scouts of the Philippines will hold the Pilar Hidalgo Lim Troop Achievement Awards on May 24 at the GSP Social Hall in its national headquarters on Padre Faura, Manila. The awards are aimed at honoring Girl Scout troops which have undertaken outstanding community development projects. Chosen as this year's most outstanding troops were the Bukidnon Junior Troop 417, Oriental Mindoro Junior Troop No. 38 and La Union Junior Troop No. 934. They will receive a certificate of recognition and P50,000 in cash each. Six troops, meanwhile, were named as outstanding troops: Makati City Junior Troop No. 40, Bukidnon Cadet Troop No. 04, Sultan Kudarat Junior Troop No. 145, Pangasinan Junior Troop No. 1336, Oriental Mindoro Junior Troop No. No. 894 and Rizal Senior Troop No. 2382. They will receive a certificate and P10,000 each. Eulalia Hidalgo Lim, Pilar Hidalgo's daughter, will be the keynote speaker. She will also hand out the awards with 2nd national vice president Salud Bagalso, national awards and recognition committee chair Martha Mogol, program committee chair Catherine Banta and national executive director Ma. Dolores Santiago.



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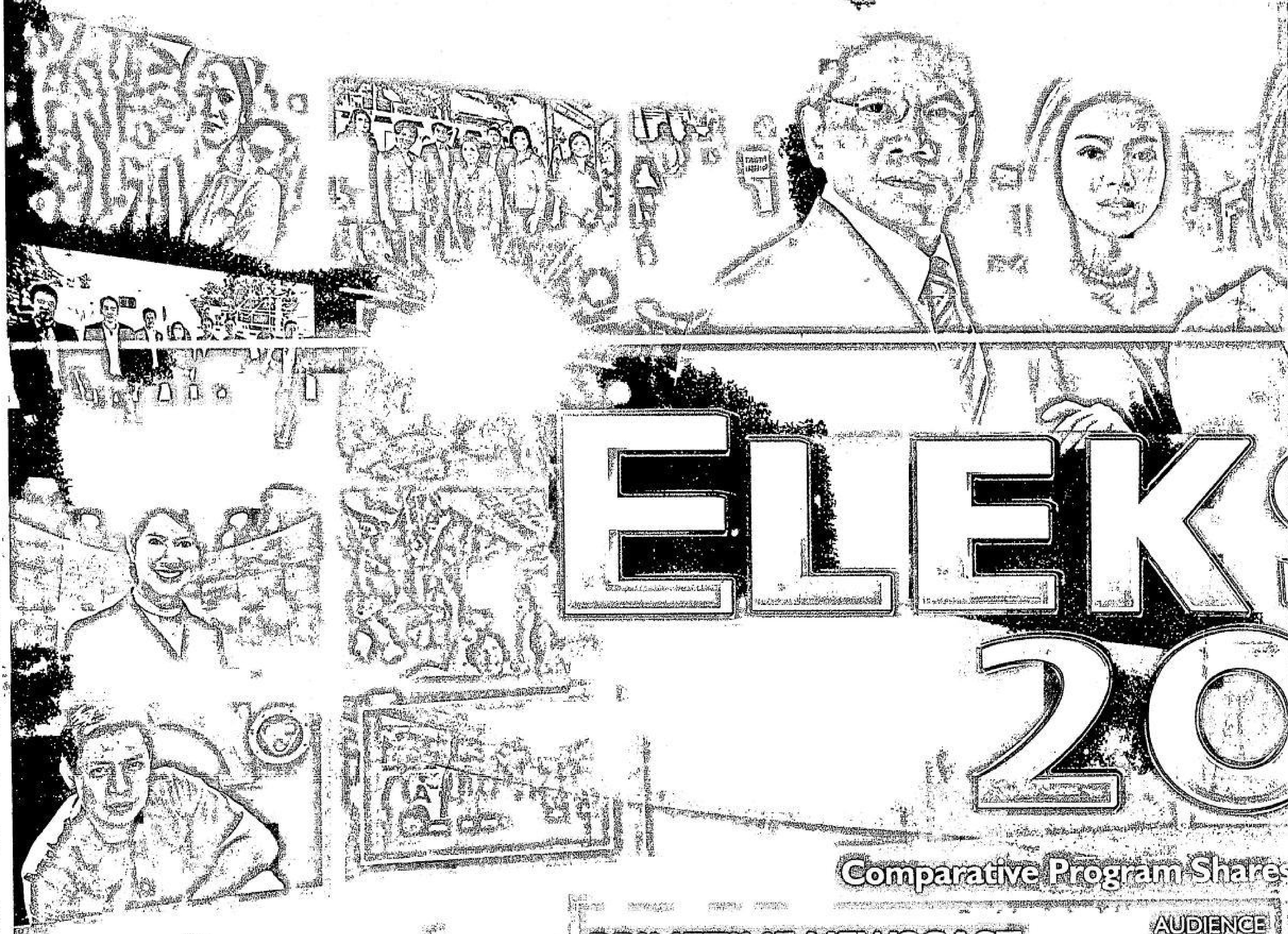

Comparative Program Shares

PRIMETIME NEWSCAST		AUDIENCE SHARE (%)
24 ORAS (MON-FRI: 7:10-7:40 PM)	**GMA**	**45.3**
TV PATROL WORLD (MON-FRI: 7:00-7:30 PM / SAT: 6:15-6:30 PM / SUN: 6:20-6:35 PM)	ABS-CBN	37.9

SOURCE: AGB Nielsen Media Research Phils. Inc. (Arianna)

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*SOURCE: Pulse Asia Inc. "Ulat ng Bayan Survey" Feb 28-Mar 5, 2007

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BANDILA (MON-THURS: 11:30-11:45 PM / FRI: 12:15-12:30 AM)	ABS-CBN	33.2

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Pope condemns Latin America's drug cartels

GUARATINGUETA, BRAZIL—Pope Benedict warned Latin America's ruthless drugs cartels on Saturday that they would face God's harsh judgment for wrecking countless lives across the region.

After hearing moving stories of hardship and recovery from former cocaine and heroin addicts on the fourth day of his visit to Brazil, the Pope said drug abuse was a scourge throughout Latin America.

"I therefore urge the drug dealers to reflect on the grave harm they are inflicting on countless young people and on adults from every level of society," he said in a speech to recovering addicts at the Farm of Hope (Fazenda da Esperanca) rehabilitation center in the rural town of Guaratingueta.

"God will call you to account for your deeds. Human dignity cannot be trampled upon in this way," he said.

Thousands of followers sang and waved flags as the Pope, flanked by bodyguards, then walked through the crowd, smiling and shaking hands.

The drugs trade has caused havoc and bloodshed in Latin America, from Colombia, the world's main source of cocaine, to Brazil, where rival trafficking gangs control many slums.

Although the United States was long the key market, Latin American countries suffer from increasing addiction among their own youth, compounding the social woes of poverty and violence.

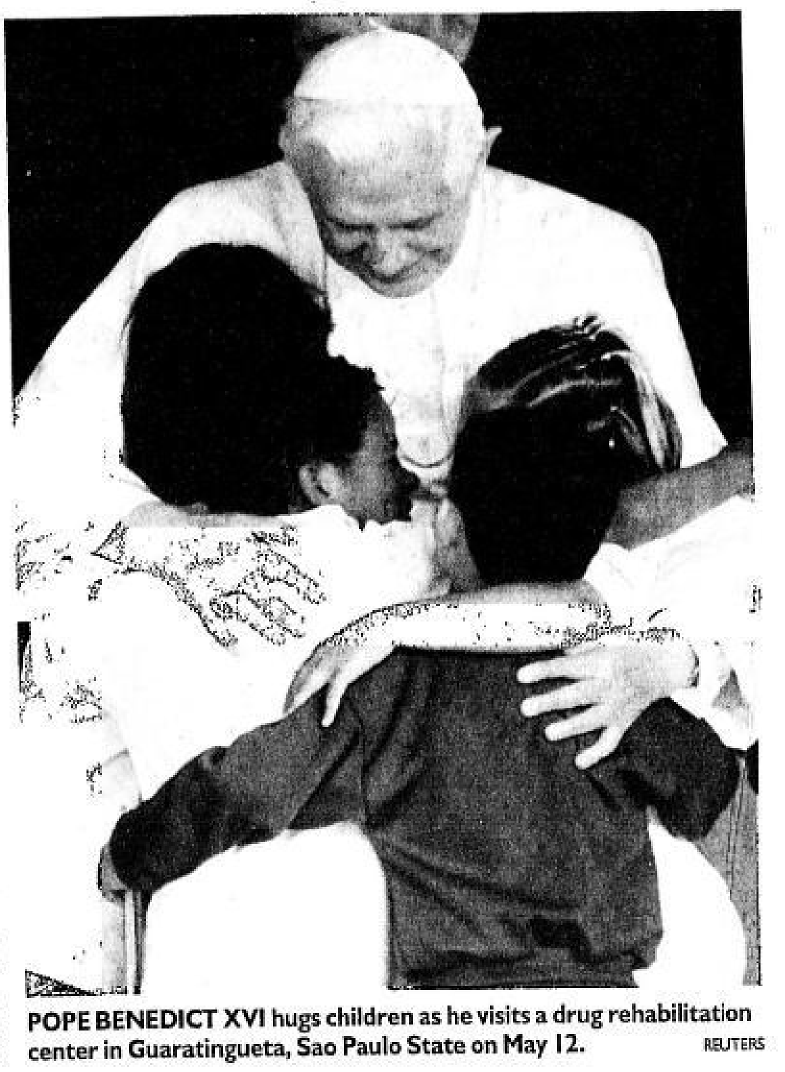
Rival drug cartels in Mexico have killed about 800 people so far this year in brutal turf wars.

About one-in-four of the 6,000 people who heard the Pope's address on a sports field at the farm, nestled in a lush valley about 15 km from the shrine city of Aparecida, were from various rehabilitation centers in Brazil.

Patients and former addicts went up on the stage to tell their stories.

Throughout his trip to the world's most populous Roman Catholic country, the Pope has railed against the hedonism of modern society and exhorted people to lead more moral lives.

He has spoken out against sex outside of marriage, and reiterated the Church's unflinching opposition to abortion. *Reuters*



POPE BENEDICT XVI hugs children as he visits a drug rehabilitation center in Guaratingueta, Sao Paulo State on May 12. REUTERS

Italian Catholics hold huge rally vs gay unions

ROME—HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of Italians, spurred by the Vatican and conservative politicians, flooded central Rome on Saturday to protest against a government plan to grant homosexual couples legal status.

The "Day of the Family" protest, staged by Roman Catholic and conservative groups, drew a million people in a carnival-like atmosphere with music, clowns and games for children, organizers said.

They gathered in front of the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, the official ecclesiastical seat of the Pope as Bishop of Rome, arriving by train and on more than 3,000 buses specially hired for the occasion.

Gathered under a bright Italian sun, the demonstrators did not chant slogans but instead carefully listened to speeches by representatives of Catholic organizations, who addressed them from a podium in front of the building.

"We are here to defend the concept of a family based on a husband, a wife and children and not of husband-husband or wife-wife," said Lucia Basile, a 54-year-old mother of three.

"I do not want to condemn homosexuals but they cannot be portrayed as being normal. I do not want my son to think that it's normal to bring home a boy rather than a girl," said Basile, who is a member of a conservative church grouping.

Michele Morandi, a priest in his 30s, said he wanted "better policies to support the family as a couple with two children finds it very difficult to make ends meet." The rally reflects mounting tensions in Roman Catholic-dominated Italy over the issue.

It has the backing of several leading conservative politicians, including former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, who attended the gathering. "I am absolutely not opposed to protecting the rights of couple," he said.

"But, I don't think that it's necessary to establish ... a second class marriage," he added.

About 3 km away, several thousand people joined a counter-rally to defend secularism and the plan to grant homosexual couples legal status. *AFP*

WEBB in Aug. 9, 2001, photo. AFP

Kate Webb, legendary chronicler of modern Asia, dead at 64

SYDNEY—THROUGH WARS, disasters and coups, foreign correspondent Kate Webb chronicled the turbulent birth of modern Asia, becoming a media legend who had the eerie experience of reading her own obituary.

Webb, who died of cancer on Sunday at 64, covered many of Asia's seminal events of the last four decades with a keen eye for the real story and a rare empathy for the innocent victims of history.

In 1971, she became caught up in the turbulence herself when she was ambushed and taken prisoner by North Vietnamese troops in Cambodia.

She and five others were marched through the jungle in a 23-day ordeal during which she was reported killed, earning a front-page obituary in the New York Times.

"It was strange and embarrassing to see that," said the soft-spoken Webb shortly before her death in Australia, her adopted homeland where she launched her journalism career in the early 1960s and retired nearly 40 years later.

She and the other captives were freed just as her family held a memorial service for her in Sydney. The body of a young woman, found near the spot where she vanished during a firefight, had been wrongly identified as hers.

"It caused a bit of a stir at home," Webb recalled a few years ago, her trademark beer and cigarette firmly in hand.

Her legend was minted in Vietnam, where she was one of only a few women to cover the war full-time and where her courage and reputation as a stickler for the facts earned her the unwavering respect of colleagues.

"Kate Webb was one of the earliest—and best—women correspondents of the Vietnam war," said Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Peter Arnett. "She was fearless as an action reporter, with a talent for the vivid phrase."

Webb's knack for being in hotspots at the right time, a fearsome wrath and her colourful bar-room antics became the stuff of folklore among fellow Asia hands who made their mark in the pre-Internet era.

Armed only with a notebook and typewriter, Webb covered the fall of Saigon in 1975, the rise of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge, the assassination of India's premier Rajiv Gandhi and the strife in East Timor. *AFP*

Russia to build Central Asia gas pipeline

ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN—PRESIDENT Vladimir V. Putin of Russia brokered an agreement on Saturday with two Central Asian countries to build a new gas pipeline to Russia, delivering a major setback to continuing American efforts to send Central Asian natural gas exports directly to Europe.

The presidents of Russia, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan agreed to build a new pipeline around the Caspian Sea, giving Russia significantly more control over much of Central Asia's massive natural gas reserves. Russia has its own bounty of natural gas, but the country's gas monopoly, Gazprom, has preferred to distribute subsidized domestic gas internally while reselling Central Asian gas to Europe at prices that are typically more than double what it is charged.

US officials have aggressively courted the rulers of Central Asia. In a visit to Kazakhstan last summer, Vice President Dick Cheney lobbied for new energy routes that bypass Russia, calling Russia's wielding of its energy supplies "tools for intimidation and blackmail."

With Saturday's agreement to build a new natural gas pipeline, "technological, legal and ecological risks are so big that it will be impossible to find an investor" for a US-promoted trans-Caspian pipeline "unless it is a political investor who does not care how much gas there is to pump through," said Viktor Khristenko, Russia's energy minister, at a news conference in Turkmenbasy, the city on Turkmenistan's Caspian coast playing host to a summit meeting on energy issues among the three countries.

The presidents agreed to sign a formal treaty in September to build the pipeline, which is expected to run along the Caspian shore from Turkmenistan through Kazakhstan, with a goal of delivering some 10 billion cubic feet of natural gas per year to Russia's existing gas delivery grid within three years. *NYT*

Suspicious trading on the rise on Wall Street

NEW YORK—ON WALL STREET, IT FEELS like the 1980s all over again.

Investment banks and private equity firms are minting money on a binge of deal making—and regulators are, again, knee-deep in insider trading cases.

Just this week, US authorities froze the account of a Hong Kong couple suspected of insider trading on $15 million worth of Dow Jones shares, arrested a banker at Credit Suisse charged with leaking deal information to a contact in Pakistan, and accused another couple of illegally trading on information out of Morgan Stanley's real estate subsidiary.

But unlike the scandals in the 1980s, when Wall Street stars like Ivan F. Boesky were caught in insider trading investigations, the latest flurry of cases have chiefly involved young, bit players in the same old stories: Wives team with husbands, investment bankers call friends, and analysts pay old debts with valuable tips.

Robert A. Marchman, head of market surveillance at NYSE Regulation, says the Boesky doesn't scare the young guns of today's Wall Street.

"You are dealing with people who dont have a recollection of what took place in that scandal and think they are above the law, that the regulators don't have the technology to detect this activity," he said. "As evidenced by the number of recent cases, they are flat out wrong" *NYT*

BPI launches BPI LTNCD

Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) continues to take its customers to new heights of financial success by launching its maiden issue of BPI LONG-TERM NEGOTIABLE CERTIFICATES OF DEPOSIT (BPI LTNCD) at P2 billion with a greenshoe option not exceeding P5 billion, "In line with BPI's objective of taking its customers farther, BPI now offers our depositors a superior investment option via BPI LTNCD and will also boost the Bank's capability to offer long-term fixed rate loans to our borrowers," said BPI President Aurelio Montinola III.

The BPI LTNCD carries a maturity of 5 years and 1 month and may be availed from May 10 to 17, 2007 for a minimum investment of only Php 100,000 through its selling agents BPI Capital Corporation and Standard Chartered Bank.

The BPI LTNCD is a 5-year fixed rate negotiable certificate of deposit denominated in Philippine Pesos. LTNCDs offer the investors a safe, liquid and high-yielding fixed rate investment. Just like an ordinary time deposit account, the amount invested in LTNCDs is insured with the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC) for up to Php 250,000 per depositor. However, with its bond-like feature, LTNCDs are negotiable instruments, allowing investors to purchase and sell these in the secondary market at any time, as an independent market maker commits to provide daily bid and offer prices.

The issue signifies BPI's continuing commitment to be a partner in achieving its customer's financial aspirations and at the same time enables the Bank to further contribute in the development of local capital markets.

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Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) President Aurelio R. Montinola III signs the agreement to launch its 5-Year Fixed Rate Long-Term Negotiable Certificates of Deposit (LTNCD) with Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) as Underwriter. The BPI LTNCD is a long-term deposit product that offers investors an attractive yield. It also provides a liquidity feature via negotiation in the secondary market. Also shown in the picture are (seated, from left) Jose Teodoro K. Limcaoco, BPI Capital Corp. President; Antonio V. Paner, BPI EVP and Treasurer; Aurelio R. Montinola III, BPI President; Michaelangelo R. Aguilar, SCB Acting CEO; Seow Pang Ng, SCB Global Markets Head; and Natividad N. Alejo, BPI Senior Vice-President; (standing, from left) Rewadee Fanega, SCB Director; Christina Goco, SCB Director, Gregorio Veran, BPI Vice-President; Diana Singson, SCB Director; Michael Calleja, BPI Vice-President; Corazon Tumbocon, BPI Vice-President; Imelda Trillo, BPI Senior Vice-President; Cecilia Tan, BPI Vice-President; Grace Suarez, SCB Director; and Lee Ochoa, SCB Director.
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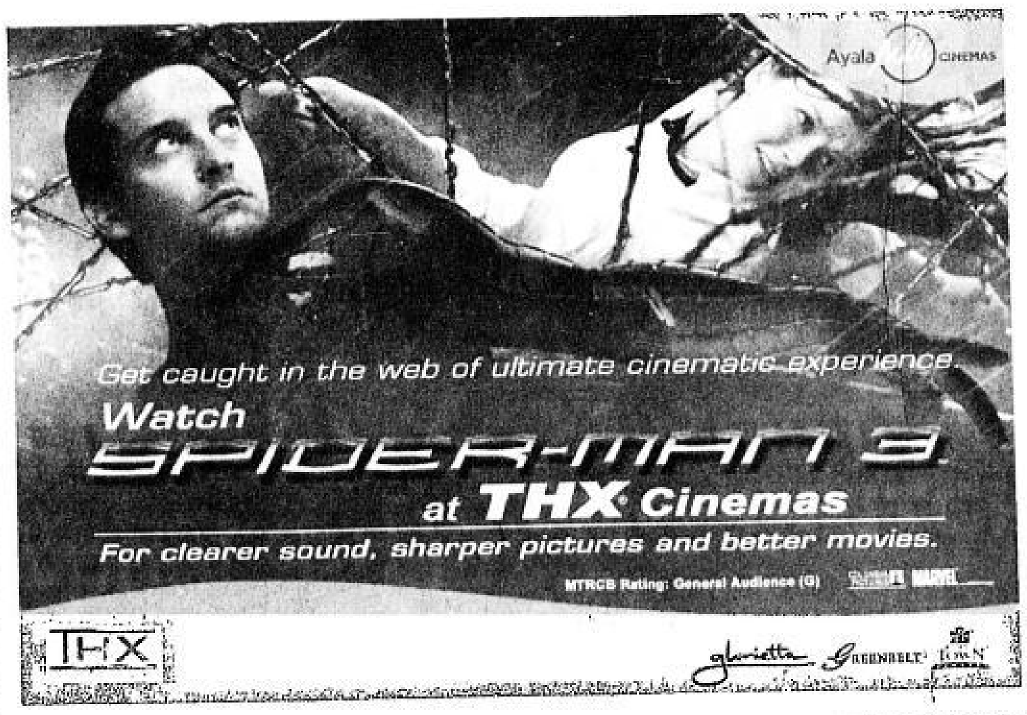
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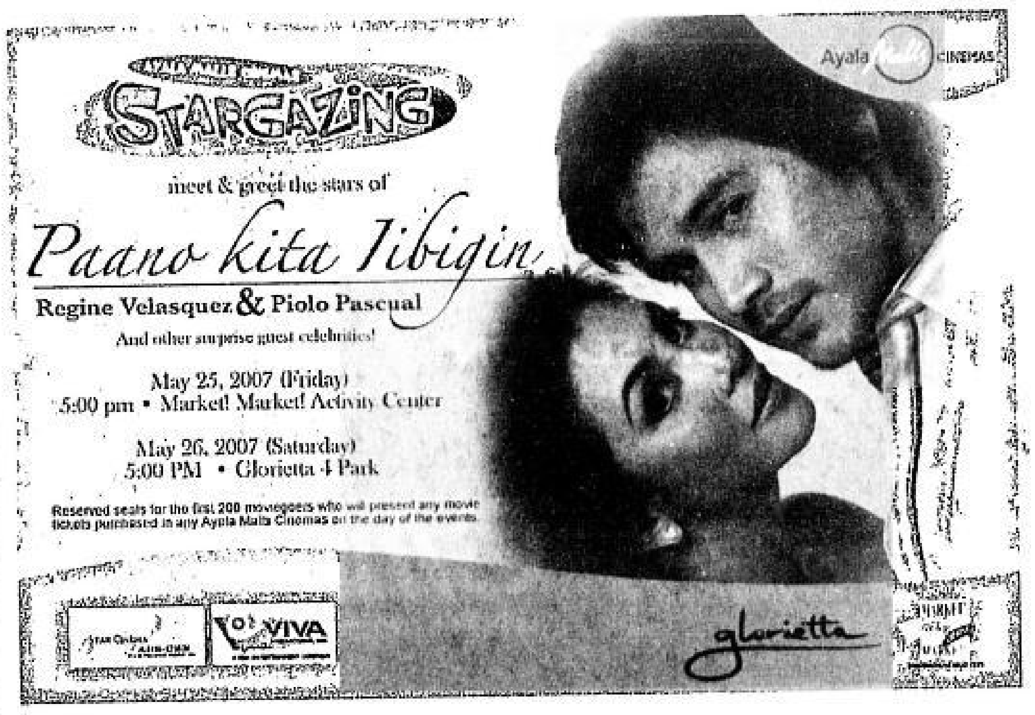
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Top Taliban commander Dadullah killed, says gov't

KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN—The Afghan government said Sunday top Taliban military commander Mullah Dadullah was killed in southern Afghanistan in its most significant success against the insurgent movement.

The Taliban however denied that its notorious one-legged commander was dead, promising to produce a fresh recording of his voice to prove that he was alive.

Afghan authorities presented a bloodied body to journalists in the southern city of Kandahar that they said was that of Dadullah, who has claimed to lead thousands of men and have hundreds more ready to carry out suicide attacks.

The features were similar to those of the famous militant, who has appeared in several photographs and television interviews. There was a bullet wound to his head and another to his chest.

The corpse was also missing the lower part of one leg—one of the trademarks of the fighter, although many men in Afghanistan have lost a limb after decades of war.

Kandahar governor Assadullah Khalid said authorities were certain they had the right man because the operation that killed him in Helmand province on Saturday was based on "exact information."

"After the operation we picked his body from among other bodies. The appearance, specific signs match those of Mullah Dadullah," he said.

Nato's International Security Assistance Force was involved in the operation, he said, but ISAF refused to comment, referring all queries to the Afghan government.

The Afghan interior ministry said Dadullah was killed in Helmand's Girishk area, alongside his brother and several other fighters. Girishk was where he lived, it said in a statement.

"According to security officials in Helmand, a number of enemies have been captured," it said.

Helmand governor Asadullah Wafa said the operation that killed the commander was late Saturday.

"Yes, Dadullah has been killed. Obviously it will have an impact on the current insurgency because he was a key Taliban fighter, a big commander," he told AFP.

Dadullah is the most important rebel commander to be killed since the Taliban was driven from government by a US-led coalition in late 2001.

Intelligence agency spokesperson Sayed Ansari described him as the "biggest Taliban commander ever killed." "He was the commander of commanders," he said.

Television stations interrupted routine broadcasting to give breaking news of the killing.

But a Taliban spokesperson rejected the government's claim. "This is nothing more than propaganda," spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid told AFP.

"They claim they will show the body of Mullah Dadullah to media—we are waiting to see that. We also promise to present to the media a fresh voice recording of Mullah Dadullah." The government of President Hamid Karzai "want to boost the morale of their losing soldiers in the south with such propaganda," he said.

The one-legged militant was known as the key military strategist behind the insurgent Taliban and was said to be close to the rebels' fugitive supreme commander, Mullah Mohammad Omar. *AFP*

DADULLAH in undated photo.

Serbia's 'Prayer' wins Eurovision Song Contest

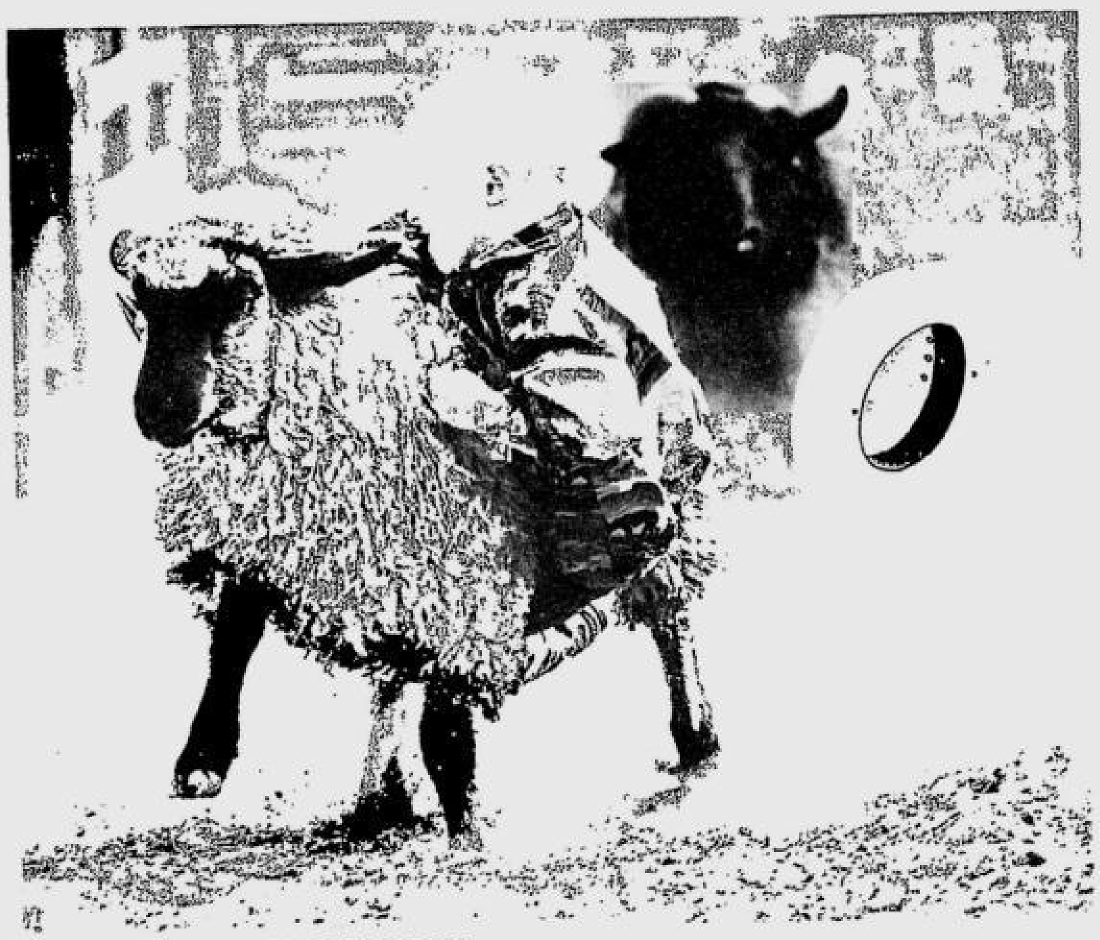
HELSINKI—SERBIA'S MARIJA Serifovic won the Eurovision Song Contest on Saturday, beating competitors from 23 other countries in a three-hour televised mishmash of power ballads, ethnic rhythms, and bubble-gum pop.

Serifovic, 22, scored 268 points from telephone voters in 42 countries with her potent but simply staged ballad "Molitva," or "Prayer."

"I honestly think that a new chapter has opened for Serbia and not only in music. I'm proud," Serifovic told a news conference after the contest, broadcast live across Europe to an estimated 100 million viewers.

Serbia spent the 1990s embroiled in Balkan wars and largely isolated internationally under Slobodan Milosevic, and its transition to democracy has been marked by failed elections and political assassinations.

It was Serbia's first solo appearance in the contest, held this year in the Finnish capital Helsinki after monster-masked rockers Lordi secured Finland's first win last year. *Reuters*



RIDE 'EM COW ... ER, SHEEPBOY
Five-year-old Logan Uschan of Orfordville, Wis., loses his hat as he tries to hang onto his sheep during the Mutton Bustin' competition at the Ridge and Valley Little Britches Rodeo in Gays Mills, Wis. on May 12. AP

Afghan civilian deaths undermine war on Taliban

ZERKOH, AFGHANISTAN—Scores of civilian deaths over the past months from heavy US and allied reliance on air strikes to battle Taliban insurgents are threatening popular support for the Afghan government and creating severe strains within the Nato alliance.

Afghan, US and other foreign officials say they worry about the political toll the civilian deaths are exacting on President Hamid Karzai, who the week before last issued another harsh condemnation of the US and Nato tactics, and even of the entire international effort here.

What angers Afghans are not just the bombings, but also the raids of homes, the shootings of civilians in the streets and at checkpoints, and the failure to address those issues over the five years of war. Afghan patience is wearing dangerously thin, officials warn.

At Nato headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, military commanders and diplomats alike said they fear that divisions within the coalition and the loss of support among Afghans could undermine what until now was considered a successful spring, one in which Nato launched a broad offensive but the Taliban did not.

"The will and support of the Afghan people is vitally important to what we do here," said Gen. Dan K. McNeill, the US commander of the International Security Assistance Force. "We are their guests, they are the hosts. We have to be mindful of their culture, we have to operate in the context of their culture, and we have to take every possible precaution to not cause undue risk to those around us, and to their property."

But US officials say that they have been forced to use air power more intensively as they have spread their reach throughout Afghanistan, raiding Taliban strongholds that have gone untouched for six years.

Anger is visible here in this village in Herat province, where US air strikes left 57 villagers dead on April 27 and 29.

The US military says it came under fire from insurgents as it searched for a local tribal commander and weapons caches and called in air strikes, killing 136 Taliban fighters. But the villagers denied that any Taliban were in the area. *NYT*

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Violence in Karachi flares anew after street clashes kill 34

KARACHI—A PAKISTANI OPPOSITION SUPPORTER WAS KILLED in Karachi on Sunday during a protest against violence the previous day in which 34 people were killed in clashes between pro-government and opposition activists.

The worst political street violence Pakistan has seen since the 1980s erupted on Saturday when the country's suspended top judge tried to meet supporters in the southern city.

Government attempts to remove Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry over unspecified accusations of misconduct on March 9 outraged the judiciary and the opposition and has snowballed into a campaign against President Pervez Musharraf.

It is the most serious challenge to the authority of the president, who is also Army chief, since he seized power in 1999.

Pakistan's biggest city was largely deserted on Sunday but groups of men gathered in some areas. A protest built up in one neighborhood after the funerals of three opposition supporters killed on Saturday, police said.

"About 1,000 people are protesting on the roads and they have also fired on police. Police resorted to teargasing to disperse the mob but they are still on the streets," said police officer Shad Ibne Masih. One person was killed, he said.

Small clashes erupted in several other parts of the city.

The fear in Karachi is that Saturday's violence would reignite bloody feuding between ethnic-based factions that plagued the city in the 1980s and 1990s.

Musharraf condemned the violence in a speech at a rally of tens of thousands of his supporters in Islamabad late on Saturday.

But he ruled out declaring a state of emergency saying the people were with him. Elections due late this year would be held on time, he said.

The police were widely criticized for failing to stop Saturday's bloodshed in which at least 34 people were killed and more than 130 people wounded.

"The police definitely failed. They did not respond," a provincial government official said.

Police said on Sunday security measures were in place.

"We have increased patrols and will focus more on the areas worst affected yesterday," said city police chief Azhar Farooqi.

Saturday's clashed pitted members of the pro-government Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), which runs Karachi and opposed an attempt by Chaudhry to hold a rally with his supporters in the city, against its opponents.

They include an alliance of religious parties and former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which said 15 of its workers were killed.

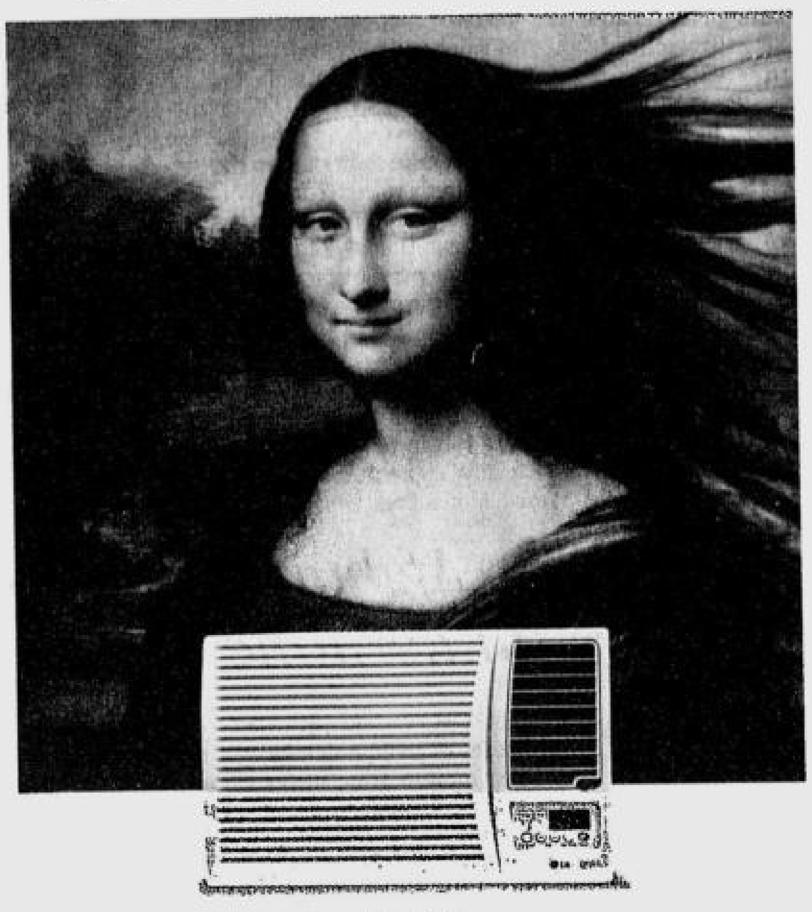
The opposition Awami National Party (ANP), which represents ethnic Pashtuns, many of whom live in Karachi, said 11 workers were killed and the Jamaat-e-Islami religious party said three workers were killed.

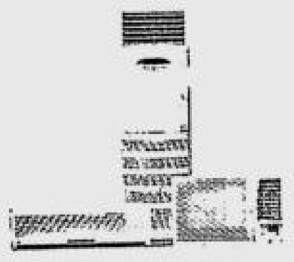
The MQM said 11 supporters were killed.

It was not clear why the tally of party tolls was more than the toll given by the provincial government.

Chaudhry denies wrongdoing and has refused to resign.

His visit to Karachi was meant to be the latest in a series of protests by the opposition and lawyers to press for his reinstatement. *Reuters*





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RP five gets going vs host Iran

Villanueva rejoins squad

TEHRAN—THE SAN MIGUEL-PHILIPPINE TEAM, ITS LINEUP complete following the arrival of Enrico Villanueva early in the day, opened its campaign against host Iran in the 18th Fiba Asia Champions Cup late last night at the Azadi Sports Complex gym.

The Group B match was set at 4:15 p.m. (8:45 p.m. in Manila) with the Nationals looking forward to a tough game against the Iranians, who used their stars sparingly but still whipped import-less Bahrain, 78-48, Saturday.

The top team from the five-team Group B advances outright to the semifinals after the eliminations, and this gives national coach Chot Reyes' squad a stronger motivation to win not only against the hosts.

"There is now a big incentive to top our group, and to do that, it is imperative that we win all games," said Reyes, whose boys are using the event as warmup for next week's Seaba tournament in Thailand which serves as qualifier for the Fiba Asia championship in July.

GAMES SUNDAY
(*Tehran time*)
4:15 p.m.—Iran (B) vs. Philippines
6:30 p.m.—Qatar vs. India (A)
8:45 p.m.—Bahrain vs. Kazakhstan (B)

Iran, represented by Saba Battery Club, led the winners at the start of the eight-nation tournament last Saturday, playing just hard enough against undermanned Bahrain, whose two imports were denied entry due to visa problems.

Former Purefoods import Gabe Muoneke saw limited action in the first half, along with Iran's top gunners Samad Bahrami, Aidin Bahrami and Babak Nazafat, while hulking import Joseph Garth rode the bench the entire game.

Syria joined Saba as early Group B leader by blasting listless Kazakhstan, 94-70.

Lebanon beat Qatar, 76-68, in the lone match in Group A, where all three teams are already assured of quarterfinal berths following the last-minute withdrawals of clubs from Kuwait and Jordan.

REYES: We've been keeping an eye out on the Iranians for a long time.

The Filipinos, who drew an opening-day bye and had the luxury of scouting the opposition, was not fooled by the Iranians' strategy.

"Very typical *na ang mga taguang ganyan sa* (are such underperformances in) international competitions," said Reyes. "That is why our original program was not only a three-year preparation but also a three-year scouting, so we won't be surprised by the opposition.

"We've been keeping an eye out on those guys (Iranians) for a long time."

But, just to be on the safe side, Reyes wants his players to be prepared for the unexpected.

"Remember, we do not know the teams we're playing, so we've got to make sure we're going to get our sets in, that we make the stops we have to," he said to the players.

Villanueva, whose Red Bull team played a PBA game Saturday, and assistant coach Nash Racela arrived in the Iranian capital early Sunday.

Reyes said Villanueva will help shore up his team's frontline, especially against the Iranians, who have a tall frontline anchored on Muoneke, Garth and Asghar Kardoust, a 6-foot-8 Sonny Thoss look-alike.

Earlier Sunday, Reyes received a message of good luck from Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas president Manny V. Pangilinan, who also offered a bit of history.

Pangilinan harked back to the time when Iran was known as Persia, and how Alexander the Great defeated and conquered the Persian hordes despite inferior numbers.

From Barangay Ginebra coach and RP Team consultant Jong Uichico: "You have formed the team in the best way possible. Good luck."

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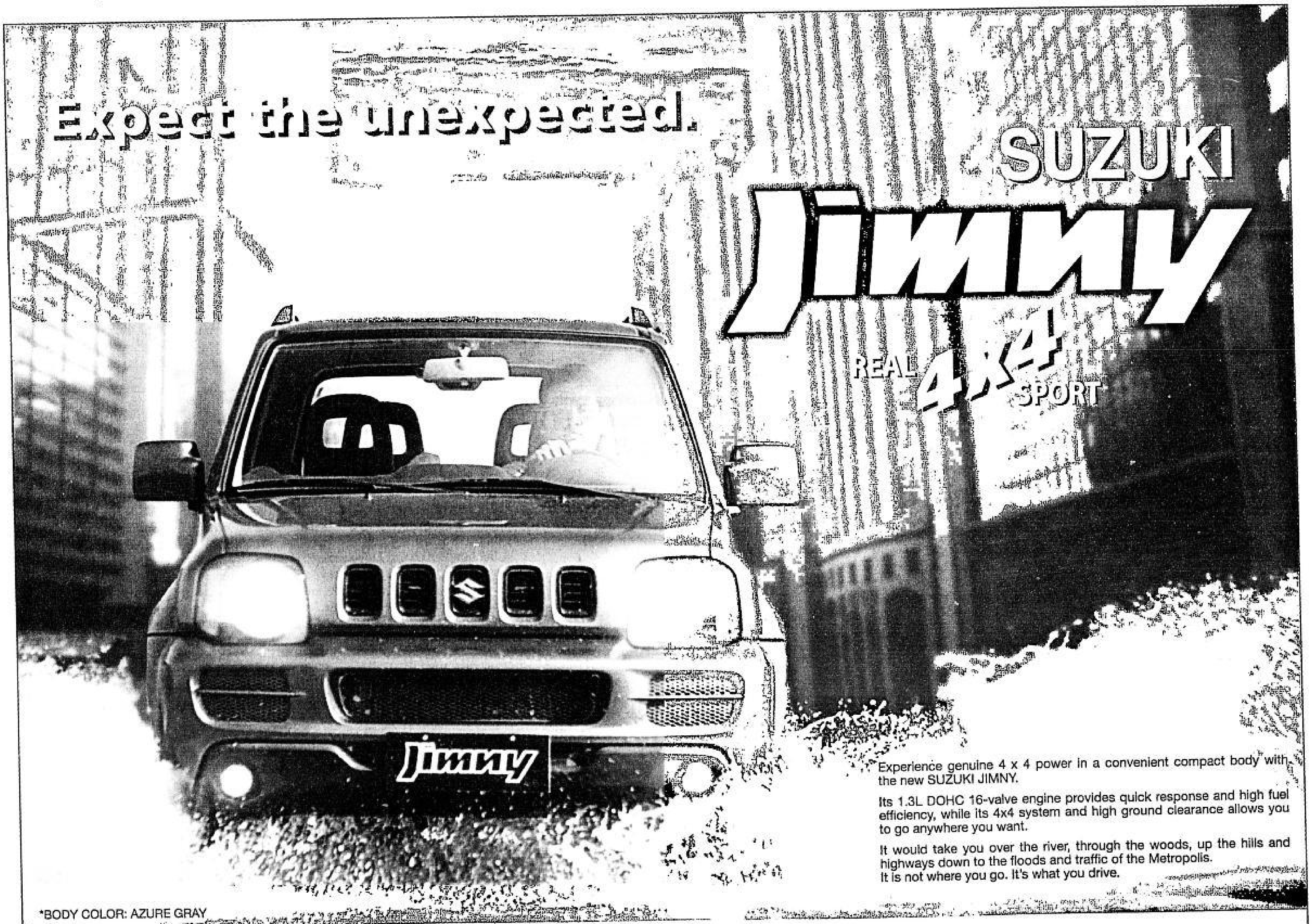

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PETRON Fuel Success

Cruz steps up as Road Kings sink Batang Pier

By Jasmine W. Payo

MARVIN CRUZ CAME INTO THE GAME LOOKing far from ready to break out of his slump.

The 5-foot-8 point guard finally rewarded the confidence given him in the second half, leading the Toyota Balintawak Road Kings past Harbour Centre, 69-63, Saturday night at the Arena in San Juan.

The Road Kings, who ended a two-game skid, halted Harbour Centre's six-game winning run and pushed the Batang Pier to a tie for first with Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala at 6-2.

Toyota Balintawak forged a three-way tie for third place with Henkel Sista and Burger King at 4-4 as Cruz overcame a poor start in only his third game in the conference after a bout with mumps.

"I have high respect for Marvin that's why despite his eight turnovers in the first half, I did not pull him out," said said coach Ariel Vanguardia.

"Maybe I've been putting him in and out of the court in the last two games, that's why he's struggling. So I decided to give him full minutes whatever happens."

Cruz scattered 18 points, seven rebounds, five assists and four steals after averaging only 6.5 markers in his first two outings.

The turning point came in the third period when Cruz buried five free throws to lift the Road Kings up, 44-42, after trailing 22-30 at halftime.

The Road Kings went on to surge ahead by 66-54 in the fourth canto, before Batang Pier orchestrated a last-ditch 9-0 run in the final two minutes that cut the margin to 66-63.

Marco Fajardo and Chris Baluyot sealed the Road Kings' victory by nailing three of their four foul shots with only 15.4 seconds remaining.

The scores:

TOYOTA BALINTAWAK 69—Cruz 18, Daa 16, Cabahug 16, Baluyot 10, Coronel 6, Jaime 2, Fajardo 1, Coching 0, Alcaraz 0, Cagoco 0, Dedicatoria 0, Guerrero 0, Rodriguez 0.

HARBOUR CENTRE 63—Asoro 12, Castro 12, Belga 11, Araña 9, Intal 4, Vergara 3, Fernandez 3, Lanete 3, Capati 2, Alonzo 2, Ortiguerra 2, Duncil 0.

Quarters: 8-13, 22-30, 47-44, 69-63

GAMES TOMORROW
(The Arena, San Juan)
2 p.m.—Cebuana Lhuillier vs Henkel Sista
4 p.m.—Dazz 'Sang Patak vs Harbour Centre

Ardina, Aunzo put away Sabah Am Open crowns

DOTTIE ARDINA AND FERDIE AUNZO rallied with hot rounds on the final day yesterday as the Philippines swept the championship of the Sabah Amateur Open in Sabah, Malaysia.

The 13-year-old Ardina shot a three-under 69 to capture the ladies crown by seven strokes over compatriot Bambee de la Paz.

Anya Tanpinco was third, a stroke farther adrift.

Aunzo, justifying his recent inclusion in the national pool backed by ICSTI, fought back from three shots down to nip national amateur champion Jay Bayron for the men's title by one stroke with a one-under 71.

The 27-year-old Aunzo, who shot 75 and 71 in the first two rounds, finished with a 54-hole 217 total to secure his first international victory.

Bayron, leader in the first two rounds, limped home with a 75, his bid for the title ruined when he drove out of bounds on No. 14. He settled for runner-up honors with 218.

Wilson Choo took third with a 224 total after a 75 as Miko Alejando skied to an 84 for 231.

The 13-year-old Ardina, one down behind De la Paz at the start of the final round, took control after eight holes with four birdies and never looked back, finishing with a three-day 217 total.

De la Paz, who wrested the second-round lead after first-round leader Cyna Rodriguez was disqualified for signing a wrong scorecard, faltered with a 77, nipping Tanpinco by one stroke for second place with 224.

Tanpinco carded a 75 for 225.

FILIPINO SWEEP: Ferdie Aunzo and Dottie Ardina show their trophies after their final-round surges. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

It was Ardina's second international victory this year after winning in the Thailand Juniors last month and her third straight counting her recent romp in the DHL Open.

Aunzo drew level with Bayron after a birdie on No. 14, seized the lead with another birdie on the par-3 17th then sank a pressure-packed eight-foot putt for par on the final hole to hold off Bayron.

Meanwhile, Michael Bibat failed to clinch a third title for the ICTSI golfers when he lost in the second playoff hole to HJ Sieta of Brunei in their sudden death duel for the Naim Sarawak Masters crown at the Kelab Golf Sarawak course in Kuching, Malaysia.

Bibat, bronze medalist in the last Asian Games, finished with a 72 while Sieta salvaged a 74 to end up tied at 147 in the 54-hole competition.

Anthony Fernando shot a 73 and Dante Becierra a 75 to finish third and fourth with 222 and 224, respectively. Gene Bondoc wound up seventh after a 75.

Fil-Am ace boosts Henkel's fortunes

NO LESS THAN THE TOURNAMENT COMmissioner has tagged him as the "next important big guard" of amateur basketball.

After just three games, Henkel Sista's Fil-Am ace Ryan Reyes has proven Philippine Basketball League commissioner Chino Trinidad right, earning Player of the Week honors for powering the Super Sealers to back-to-back wins last week in the ongoing PBL Unity Cup.

Despite limited playing time, the 23-year-old Reyes displayed near-flawless shooting which was what Henkel Sista needed to down 2005 Unity Cup champion San Miguel-Magnolia and Toyota Balintawak.

Against the Beverage Masters last May 8, the 6-foot-1 Reyes played only 17 minutes but still came up with 20 points in the 67-61 win. He sank all but one of eight attempts from the field, was five-of-five from the free throw area and pulled off a conference-best five steals.

In Henkel's 82-70 overtime decision of Toyota-Balintawak two days later, Reyes was a perfect six-of-six from the field to finish with 16 markers.

Though he fouled out late in regulation play, Super Sealers coach Caloy Garcia said Reyes' offensive prowess had set up Henkel's win.

"*Hulog siya ng langit sa amin* (He's truly a blessing to the team)," said Super Sealers coach Caloy Garcia of Reyes.

Reyes, who played with NBA 3-point Shootout King Jason Kapono of Miami Heat at Artesia High School in California, said he is still adjusting to the weather as he arrived in the country just last week.

"But I love playing here. The level of competition is high and I like the physical game," said Reyes, who had a brief stint with the Cebuana Lhuillier-sponsored national team in 2005.

What Boom Boom learned from mismatches

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

BOOM BOOM BAUTISTA HAS ONLY HIS big, hungry-boy's heart to thank for winning his last fight in Las Vegas.

The young star of Philippine boxing was not his sharp, sweet-punching self in that bout, and this could only be blamed on the proper pairing.

After Bautista finally met his match in Sergio Manuel Medina, the Bohol Bomber suddenly turned predictable, was often slow and lost.

In fact, a week after the Bautista-Medina thriller at the MGM Grand, many fans were still wondering whether Boom Boom would've survived if the referee did not come to his rescue in the heat of a killing attack that had pushed the Filipino sensation dazed against the ropes.

* * *

It was unclear if Bautista had actually used the ropes to stay on his feet.

But the referee obviously thought so, and thus ruled a knockdown after Boom Boom's right glove got momentarily lodged on the top strand at the height of trouble.

Just the same, there were those who felt Bautista could've lost on points had he not landed the looping right hook—not unlike a wide, wild baseball pitch—that floored Medina in the 11th round.

It was inevitable that Boom Boom's hard-earned win would also expose many soft spots in his arsenal.

Suddenly, it became clear that Bautista had learned very little on vital defense while keeping an unbeaten record in earlier bouts.

* * *

Against Medina, Boom Boom would mostly stand stiff as a peg, unable to properly duck or weave while under siege.

This flaw could, of course, be traced to those trouble-free wins against outmatched foreigners in bouts that would turn into punching picnics.

After the reality check against Medina, there's no way for Bautista but to cram for decent defense in time for his WBO crown challenge slated later this year.

Yes, Bautista has hardly profited from a series of mismatches that ironically helped keep his stardom ablaze.

Of course, his chief handler, the respected and admired Antonio Aldeguer of Cebu, had demanded tough foes for Boom Boom, in a bid to properly prime up the young boxing sensation.

It was just unfortunate that Aldeguer would seldom get what he had demanded.

This also means that sincerity, if not outright innocence, could serve as a chief ingredient for hideous mismatches.

That said, here's a letter from well-meaning lovers of sports in Negros:

* * *

Dear sir;

This is a must-react situation, regarding your commentary last April 25, 2007, from members and officials of the Negros Amateur Boxing Association (Naba) of which the undersigned is the president.

Naba is a Securities and Exchange Commission-registered non-profit association composed of well-meaning boxing aficionados in Negros Occidental, particularly in Bacolod. You wrote a series of comments and insinuations that is most unfair concerning the Asia-Pacific WBO title defense of Donnie Nietes against a Thai challenger. All because you relied solely on INQUIRER VISAYAS reporter Cedelf Tupas.

1. The unknowing boxing officials you were referring to are no other than Antonio "Bidoy" Aldeguer of the world-famous ALA Gym and international promoter Sammy Gello-ani. Not only were GAB officials present but no less than Leon Panoncillo, the executive vice president of WBO for Asia Pacific, arrived to supervise the first-ever promotion of its kind in the whole of Negros.

2. We respect the opinion of Cedelf Tupas that it was a mismatch, if indeed it was. But how can one prejudge a match to be a mismatch. The Thai did not have a 3-win 4-loss record as reported. It was more like 7-2-1 or thereabouts, but definitely his wins were more than twice his losses, and he had Muay Thai experience.

3. The Thai was not underweight either. He came in at 105 pounds (the maximum) and had to shed an extra pound to make the weight. Just because Nietes is 3 inches taller and knocked out the Thai in two rounds, the fight could not be readily considered a mismatch. George Foreman was 4 1/2 inches taller than Joe Frazier and knocked him out in round 2 or 3 but no one suggested that it was a mismatch before the fight, which turned to be a mismatch to some observers after the fight. If height is your basis for a boxing mismatch, then a lot of great fights would never have happened. Marvin Hagler knocked out Thomas Hearns, who was taller by at least 4 inches, in three rounds.

4. The most unfair insinuation in your column is comparing us with unscrupulous and wily Filipino matchmakers. The promoters of this fight card was no less than Aldeguer and Gello-ani and it was supervised by the WBO's Panoncillo who had recommended the Thai challenger. We in the Naba and the officials of Victorias City led by Mayor Severo Palanca coordinated and facilitated the promotion in line with the city fiesta celebration and the inaugural presentation of its brand-new 12,000-seat Victorias City Sports Complex.

5. Lastly, the reason the Naba coordinated and facilitated the promotion was because the promoters only charged us with the barest minimum of expenses, and we saw the opportunity to make money and subsidize our amateur development program, which is not getting a single centavo from our city government led by Mayor "Bing" Leonardia, famous friend and belt-raiser of Manny Pacquiao. Unfortunately, we were not able to recover our expenses and lost money in the promotion.

So, please allow us to explain our side. We are not self-styled sportsmen out to make a quick buck at the expense of ill-equipped boxers, Thai or Filipino. We are well-meaning boxing aficionados trying to do something about the government's neglect of sports development, particularly that of boxing.

Respectfully yours,
Juan Ramon "Monju" R. Guanzon
Naba president

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The Grand Vitara is fitted with an electronically controlled five-speed automatic transmission. Very capable off-road, it is equipped with an excellent approach, break-over and departure angles, and 7.9 inches of ground clearance, (7.4 inches for rear-wheel-drive models).

The Grand Vitara also offers a sophisticated available Four-Mode full-time four-wheel-drive system with two-speed transfer case. On the road, drivers have the security of full-time four-wheel drive, and when traveling off-road, drivers can use an interior-mounted switch to engage the center differential lock. If the going is really slow, the driver can select the Low (4L Lock) mode for low-speed power and traction.

Advanced Structural Engineering and Chassis Design

All Grand Vitara models feature a new, lightweight yet rigid unibody construction enhanced with a built-in ladder frame to offer the best of both worlds - a refined on-road ride and the rugged off-road performance expected from Suzuki SUVs. The structure is teamed with four-wheel independent suspension - MacPherson struts in front and a multi-link design in the rear - to provide precise handling both on-road and off-road. The Grand Vitara also features large, vented front disc brakes and rear drum brakes and power-assisted rack-and-pinion steering.

Uncompromised Safety Features

Every Grand Vitara model is fitted with active safety features, including ABS with electronic brake-force distribution (EBD) and Electronic Stability Program (ESP)1, including traction control. The ESP uses a variety of electronic sensors to measure vehicle speed, steering wheel angle and yaw. This information is sent to a central controller that can intervene as needed. Under certain conditions, such as when unintended oversteer or understeer is detected, the system can apply individual brakes and reduce engine torque to help the driver maintain the proper cornering line.

Together with the traction control system, the ESP helps ensure vehicle stability and optimum cornering, handling in take off or acceleration, emergency maneuvers, or driving on slippery road surfaces.

The Grand Vitara also features six airbags as standard equipment - driver and front passenger seat-mounted side-impact airbags supplemental restraint system (SRS), advanced dual-stage front airbag SRS, advanced weight-sensing front passenger airbag SRS and front and rear side-curtain airbags.

The three-point driver and front passenger seat belts feature shoulder height adjustment. In the rear seat, each passenger is provided with a three-point seat belt system and a headrest. The rear child-seat LATCH system (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children), along with rear-door child safety locks, are designed to help protect young rear-seat passengers.

The innovative stamped steel unibody with built-in ladder frame provides comprehensive protection, with features such as a reinforced cabin with the added safety of a head-impact protection padding and front and rear side-impact door beams designed to help maintain the integrity of the passenger compartment.

In the event of a collision with a pedestrian, the hood is designed to absorb some of the impact and help protect against serious head injuries. The front end and the bumper use energy-absorbing materials to help reduce the possibility of serious leg injuries.

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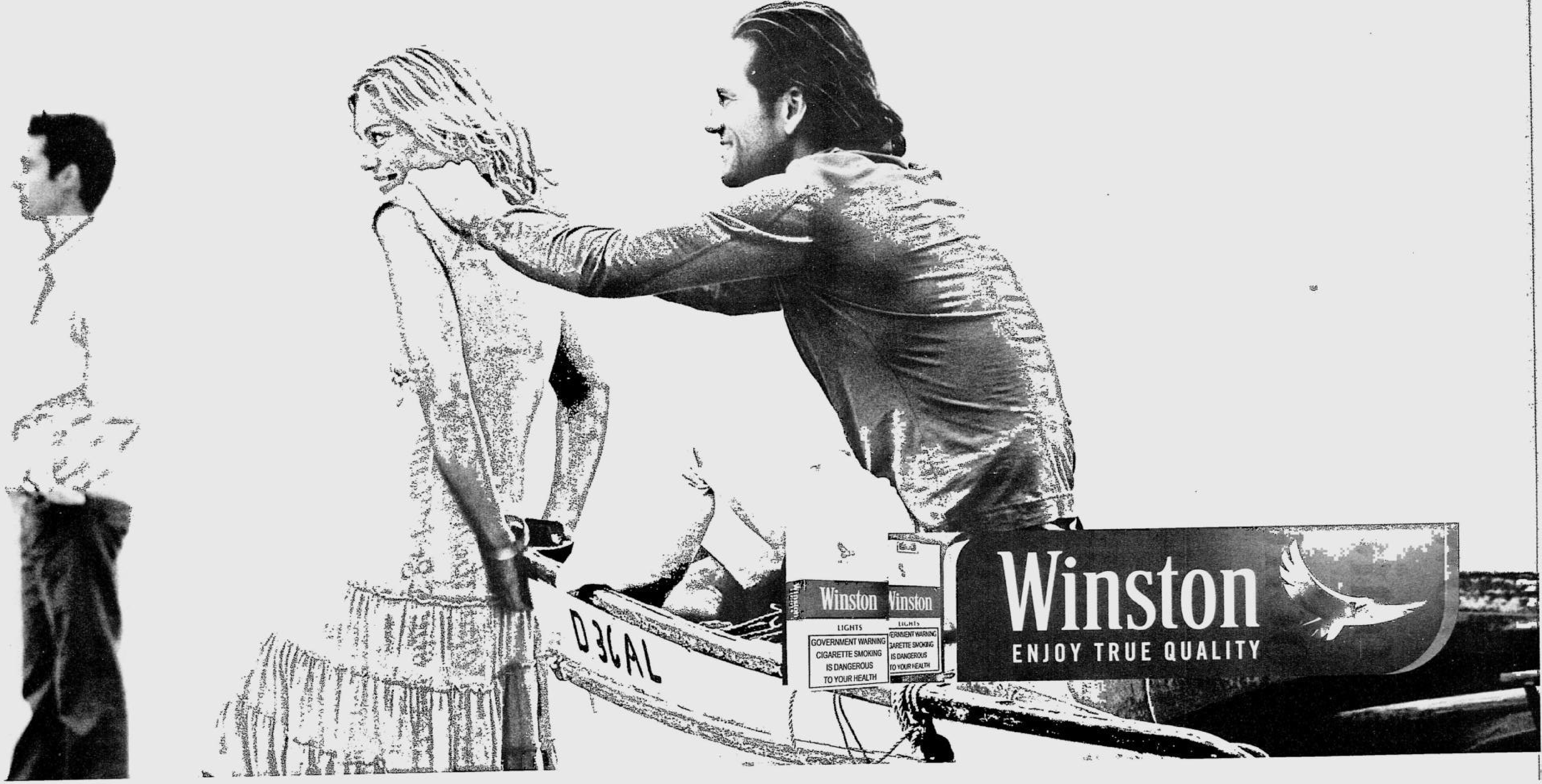
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Duncan tows San Antonio past Phoenix

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS—TIM DUNCAN scored 33 points and grabbed 19 rebounds to lead the San Antonio Spurs to a 108-101 win over the Phoenix Suns in Game Three of their Western Conference semifinal series.

San Antonio took a 2-1 lead in the series Saturday thanks to Duncan, the two-time MVP who is averaging 31.9 points in the three games. Game four is here on Monday.

"We always respond well after losses," Duncan said. "We came in here we wanted to protect our home court."

Duncan said the Spurs went into the game with something to prove after Suns' Amare Stoudemire accused San Antonio of being a dirty team.

"There were a couple of comments between games and we had a little chip on our shoulders," Duncan said.

It resulted in a minor flap in the third quarter when Bruce Bowen appeared to knee Steve Nash in the groin, sending the Suns' point guard sprawling to the floor.

Manu Ginoboli added 24 points, including 10 in the final two minutes of the third quarter, as the Spurs took control of the game.

"He was great," Duncan said of Ginobili. "Usually he is very good player against this team."

The Suns had trouble keeping pace due to the troubles of their one-two punch.

Two-time National Basketball Association MVP Nash was scoreless in the first half before finishing with 16 points, and Stoudemire was limited to just 20 minutes because of foul trouble and scored 21 points.

"We made him (Nash) work hard, because he is the best," said Spurs coach Gregg Popovich of Nash.

Shawn Marion led Phoenix with 26 points.

With the Suns trailing, 80-72, Stoudemire picked up his fifth foul just 19 seconds into the fourth and the Spurs capitalized, stretching the advantage to 86-74 before Nash buried a three-pointer.

Nash hit again from the arc to cut the lead to 94-87 with 5:22, but Robert Horry lived up to his big-shot reputation by answering with a three-pointer on the ensuing possession.

A dunk by Stoudemire brought the Suns within 99-93, but Duncan converted a three-point play at the other end to push the lead to 102-93 with exactly 3:00 left.

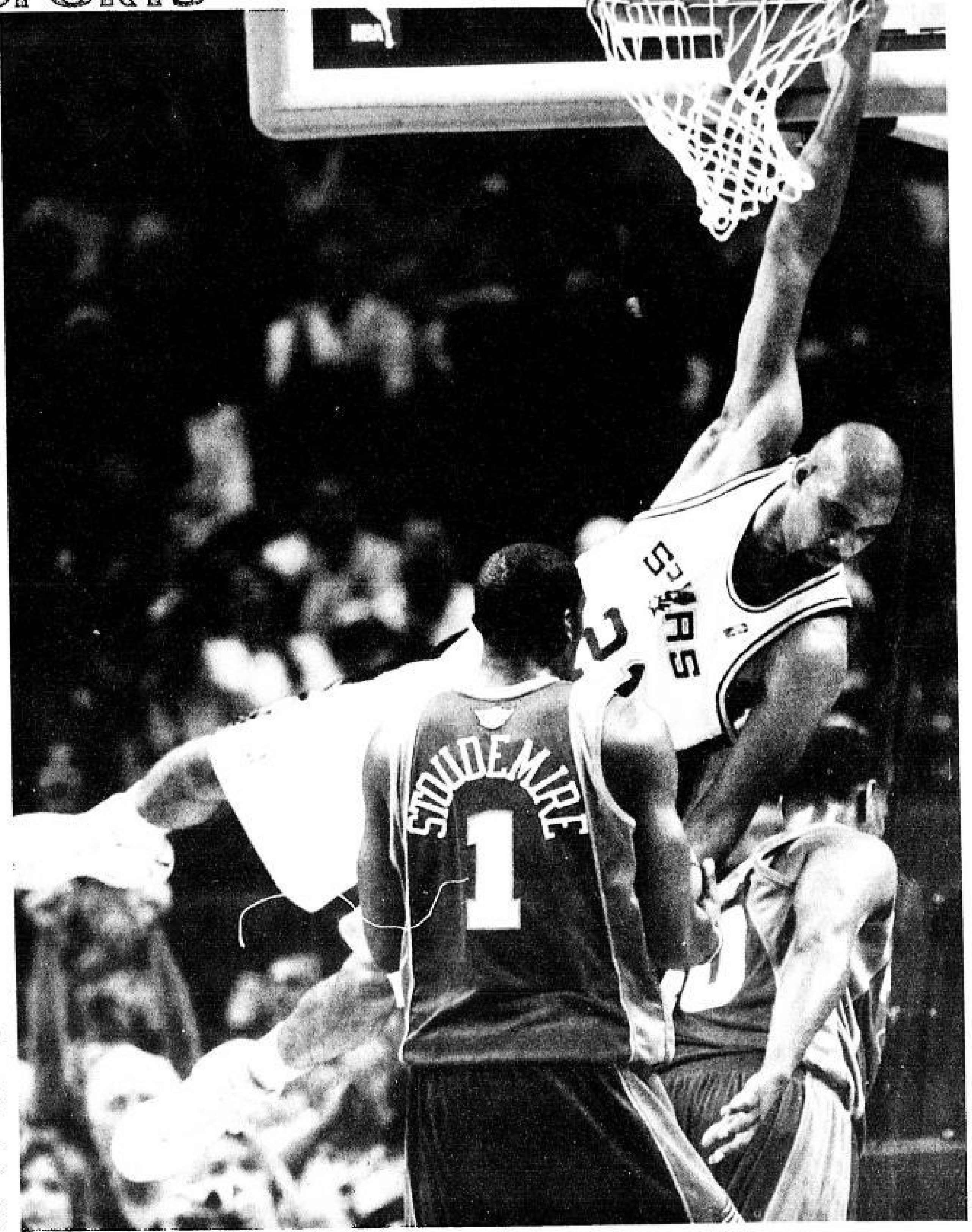
The Suns made one final push, closing within 104-98 on a three-pointer by Marion with 1:42 left, but Michael Finley ended the suspense by hitting from the arc to restore the lead to nine with 1:25 to go.

"We haven't scored well in this series," Popovich said. "We learned a little bit here and there and squeezed out a few more points out tonight."

Boris Diaw had seven points off the bench and Raja Bell hit a pair of 3-pointers to push the Suns to a 30-25 lead after one period.

Phoenix built the lead to double digits at 39-29 before Tony Parker and Duncan brought the Spurs back.

The duo combined for 19 of San Antonio's first 25 points of the quarter to slice the deficit to 51-50 with 1:17 left in the half. *AFP*



SAN ANTONIO Spurs forward Tim Duncan (21) dunks the ball in front of Phoenix big man Amare Stoudemire. AP

Nets bounce back as Kidd struts hot stuff

NEW JERSEY'S Jason Kidd, left, drives around Cleveland Cavaliers' Drew Gooden in Game 3 of their series. AP

EAST RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY—A word of advice from team mate Clifford Robinson spurred Jason Kidd to a sensational performance on Saturday, helping the New Jersey Nets beat Cleveland in Game Three of their playoff series.

Playmaking guard Kidd had game-highs of 14 assists and 13 rebounds, and posted 23 points to help prevent the Nets falling into a 0-3 hole in their best-of-seven Eastern Conference semifinals against the Cavaliers.

Cleveland still leads the series 2-1.

"Tonight I was aggressive," the 34-year-old told reporters. "Cliff (Robinson) in Game Two told me, 'don't think about it, just shoot it.' I took that wisdom tonight and came out and my teammates found me and I took shots and I just stayed aggressive."

Kidd drilled five-of-six from beyond the three-point arc and was 8-for-12 overall from the floor in the Nets' 96-85 win.

Cavaliers coach Mike Brown was full of praise for the Nets guard.

"Kidd, obviously, was a monster," Brown said.

"To go 5-for-6 from the three-point line really helped open the game up for them. That gave them a lot of easy looks because we had to worry about him.

"Then last but not least the man rebounded. He was huge tonight off the glass."

Nets coach Lawrence Frank said Kidd's determination set him apart and gave New Jersey a chance to tie the series on Monday.

"It was his intensity, his ability to attack the paint, his will, doing it on both ends and playing with such a high energy level," Frank said.

"As a captain he set a great tone, and he kept on playing throughout their runs. He obviously is very, very special." Cleveland's forward LeBron James said seeing Kidd at his best was impressive.

"When you play on the same floor as a guy who is definitely going down in history as one of the greats, you have to appreciate it," said James, who was held to 18 points on 5-for-16 shooting.

"It's special whenever you see a guy the caliber of Jason Kidd showcasing his talent."

Kidd said the Game Three victory was a group effort.

"It's about winning, bottom line. Triple doubles don't mean anything unless you win," said Kidd, who trails only Magic Johnson in career triple doubles in the playoffs.

"It was a great team effort tonight." *Reuters*

GAMES TODAY
(Basketball TV)
3:30 a.m.—Detroit vs. Chicago
9 a.m.—Utah vs. Golden State

Make no mistake about it: Mommy has proven she's got game, too

ON THE FACE OF MOTHERhood, there is a little sweat. Perhaps a little grime, too.

On the face of motherhood, there are narrow eyes and a set jaw. Also, the teeth seem to be clenched.

Look, honey.

Mommy's got game!

It is nothing new, this link between mothers and athletics. Everyone can tell stories of mothers who are influential and mothers who are inspirational. And it is true that a great many athletes found their way to the arena because of the strength of the women who bore them.

If you look around, however, you might notice this:

Some of those mothers can play.

In other words, moms aren't just for male athletes to wave to anymore. It has become increasingly common to see a female athlete walking toward an event with a child tagging behind.

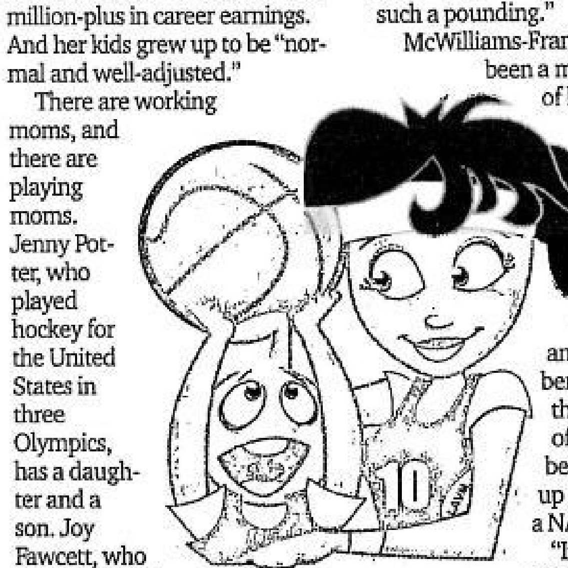
Not long ago, motherhood was usually the end of an athlete's career. No more. These days, production is still possible after reproduction.

"You can do both," said golfer Juli Inkster, 46. "You sacrifice a lot of time, a lot of 'me' time. You sacrifice a lot of rest. But it's worth it."

Not that that was Inkster's plan. Her mother was a stay-at-home mom, and Inkster was concerned about traveling with her children for weeks at a time.

"I was afraid I would raise a psycho kid," Inkster said. "I was within a nanosecond of quitting."

Good thing she didn't. After giving birth to Hayley in 1990 (and Cori in 1994), Inkster's career blossomed: She has won 18 of her 31 tournaments and has won more than $8-million of her $11-million-plus in career earnings. And her kids grew up to be "normal and well-adjusted."



There are working moms, and there are playing moms. Jenny Potter, who played hockey for the United States in three Olympics, has a daughter and a son. Joy Fawcett, who played soccer in three Olympics, has three daughters. Sheryl Swoopes won three MVP awards and four WNBA titles after having her son.

There are 28 mothers on the LPGA Tour. There are more than 30 in the WNBA. Although Fawcett and Carla Overbeck have retired, the US national soccer team alone has three.

A question: Do they make a Hallmark card that reads "My Mom can outrebound your Mom?"

"I still think we're adjusting to the image," said Taj McWilliams-Franklin, an All-Star forward with the WNBA's Los Angeles Sparks and mother of two. "It's not the norm. People don't want to admit that sports and motherhood go hand in hand, particularly in basketball, where our bodies take such a pounding."

McWilliams-Franklin, 36, has been a mother for half of her life. She was a high school senior when she became pregnant with Michele, and she remembers how quickly the scholarship offers dried up before she ended up at St. Edwards, a NAIA school.

"In 1988, it was unheard of for a pregnant single teenager to even go to college," she said. "There was a stigma attached to it, and the more you heard it, the more you believed it. I was a smart girl, and I knew I would go to college to support my baby."

Her path was not easy. McWilliams-Franklin played one season at Georgia State, transferred to the small college in Austin, Texas, and traveled across the globe for meager paychecks before establishing herself. She remembers crying herself to sleep because there was only enough food for her daughter, not for herself.

Take a look at her now. McWilliams-Franklin is a college graduate, speaks four languages and has played in 10 countries. She and her husband, Sgt. Reginald Franklin (who just completed a tour in Iraq), have a 4-year-old daughter (Maia).

There was a time it worked differently. Chris Evert waited until her playing days were done to become a mother. Florence Griffith-Joyner, too. And Steffi Graf.

There were others, uncommon athletes who would not leave the field. Dutch track star Fanny Blankers-Koen, "The Flying Housewife," was a 30-year-old mother of two when she won four gold medals in the 1948 Olympics. Margaret Court won three of the four Grand Slam events after having a child. Evonne Goolagong Cawley won Wimbledon in 1980, and no mother has won a Grand Slam singles event since.

There was Nancy Lopez and Evelyn Ashford, Pat McCormick and Valerie Brisco-Hooks. Still, it was an uncommon sight.

"You didn't see all of these moms in the gym a few years ago," McWilliams-Franklin said. "Now, there are a lot of us."

These days, you can find mothers in most sports, boxing and track, speed skating and hockey. They're fast, they're strong, they're talented. And they can have babies.

In other words, it is possible. A woman can balance a bib and a ball. She can rock a cradle and a competition. *New York Times News Service*

PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP

Birdie spree helps Sean grab hairline cushion over Phil

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida—Finishing with a hat trick of birdies gave Sean O'Hair a 6-under 66 and a one-shot lead over Phil Mickelson going into the final round of the Players Championship on Saturday.

The centerpiece of his birdie-birdie-birdie end was his tee shot on the infamous island green 17th hole, which he thought was heading into the water. It worked out better than he could have imagined.

"After that hole, I felt like puking," O'Hair said.

Mickelson narrowly escaped trouble down the back nine. His tee shot on the par-5 16th rattled through the trees on the right until it popped out in the first cut of rough, and he carved an approach from about 235 yards to 20 feet for a two-putt birdie. His final tee shot was high and hugging the lake down the left side, but settled in the fairway. He stuck his approach two feet away for birdie and a 69.

O'Hair was at 9-under 207 and will be paired with Mickelson in the final group.

O'HAIR REUTERS

But this is hardly a two-man show at the TPC Sawgrass.

Peter Lonard made a double eagle on the par-5 second—the second albatross this week—and played bogey-free the rest of his round until getting stuck behind a tree and dropping a shot on the last hole for a 68. He was at 7-under 209 along with Jeff Quinney, who shot a tournament-best 64.

Jose Coceres was among five players who had at least a share of the lead, but that changed when his 8-iron hopped over the island green and he took double bogey.

"I just let the pressure of 17 get to me, and I just hit it too hard," Coceres said after his 68.

One guy who took himself out of golf's richest tournament was Tiger Woods, who failed to break par for the fifth straight round at The Players. He shot 73—leaving him 14 strokes back at 5 over. *AP*

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MOST ATTRACTIVE OPTION

Barrera still on Pacman's mind

By Roy Luarca

GEN. SANTOS CITY—FORMER WORLD Boxing Council super featherweight Marco Antonio Barrera of Mexico remains the most attractive option for Filipino ring superstar Manny Pacquiao.

Promoter Wakee Salud, one of Pacquiao's closest advisers, stressed this yesterday as he pointed to the popularity and appeal of the Mexican great, who has been craving for a rematch with the Filipino champion.

Pacquiao first gained world renown after stopping Barrera in a non-title clash in 2003 in San Antonio, Texas, and experts expect no less than a megabuck fight in their second meeting.

But that could only happen if Pacquiao's promoter, Bob Arum, and the Golden Boy Promotions of Oscar De La Hoya come to terms as Barrera, who lost his title to fellow Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez early this year, still has an existing conract with GBP.

Top Rank and GBP are currently engaged in a legal tussle for the right to stage Pacquiao's fights.

Arum, who briefly joined Pacquiao in his hometown this week, hinted during a dinner held in his honor at the Cafe Alicia here Saturday that the Filipino's next opponent would likely be known within the week.

Unbeaten Joan Guzman heads the short list of possible Pacquiao foes followed by knockout artist Edwin Valero, Barrera and Humberto Soto.

Salud said Marquez, unless he agrees to lower the fee he is demanding to settle an old score against Pacquiao, is out of the loop.

A Marquez-Barrera rematch has reportedly been arranged for September 15, further dampening the scenario of a megabuck fight for Pacquiao within the year.

Though Guzman and Valero hold clean slates, Salud said they aren't perceive to be in the league of Barrera and Marquez as far as drawing power is concerned.

As to Soto, Salud said he needs to get by Bobby Pacquiao, Manny's younger brother, on June 9 in New York and another notable fighter to become a certified big leaguer.

The younger Pacquiao is already in Los Angeles, in deep preparation under the watchful eyes of two-time Trainer of the Year Freddie Roach at the Wild Card Gym.

Arum left Sunday morning for Manila and is scheduled to meet with Solar Sports executives before flying to Los Angeles in the afternoon.

Solar and GMA 7 pooled their resources in airing the Pacquiao-Jorge Solis bout in San Antonio, Texas, on April 14.

Sources said Arum and Solar are likely to forge another deal with regards to Manny's next fight.

Bombers shatter Archers, grab lead

By Romina Austria

THE JOSE RIZAL UNIVERSITY HEAVY Bombers overhauled a four-point deficit in the final 1:21 of the game to turn back the UAAP heavyweights La Salle Green Archers, 82-79, yesterday and grab the solo lead yesterday in the Filoil-Flying V Preseason Invitational Cup at The Arena in San Juan.

With four wins in the 13-team field, JRU likewise secured a slot in the quarterfinal round which begins June 4.

The Archers controlled the game most of the way, holding a 79-75 spread after team captain Tyrone Tang connected on a triple with 1:21 left.

But Heavy Bomber John Wilson converted three free throws while Jason Nocom scored on a breakaway layup off a steal from Tang, giving the Mandaluyong-based squad its first taste of the lead, 80-79, only 21.8 seconds to play.

DLSU coach Franz Pumaren designed a final play for JV Casio but a triple team forced the veteran Archer to miss a 10-foot heave.

Wilson recovered the loose ball and sank a layup for the final score.

DLSU, the six-time UAAP men's champion team which was suspended from the 2006 season due to ineligibility violations, dropped to 2-1.

Playmaker Mark Cagoco paced JRU with a game-high 23 markers, Wilson added 15 and Marvin Hayes contributed 11.

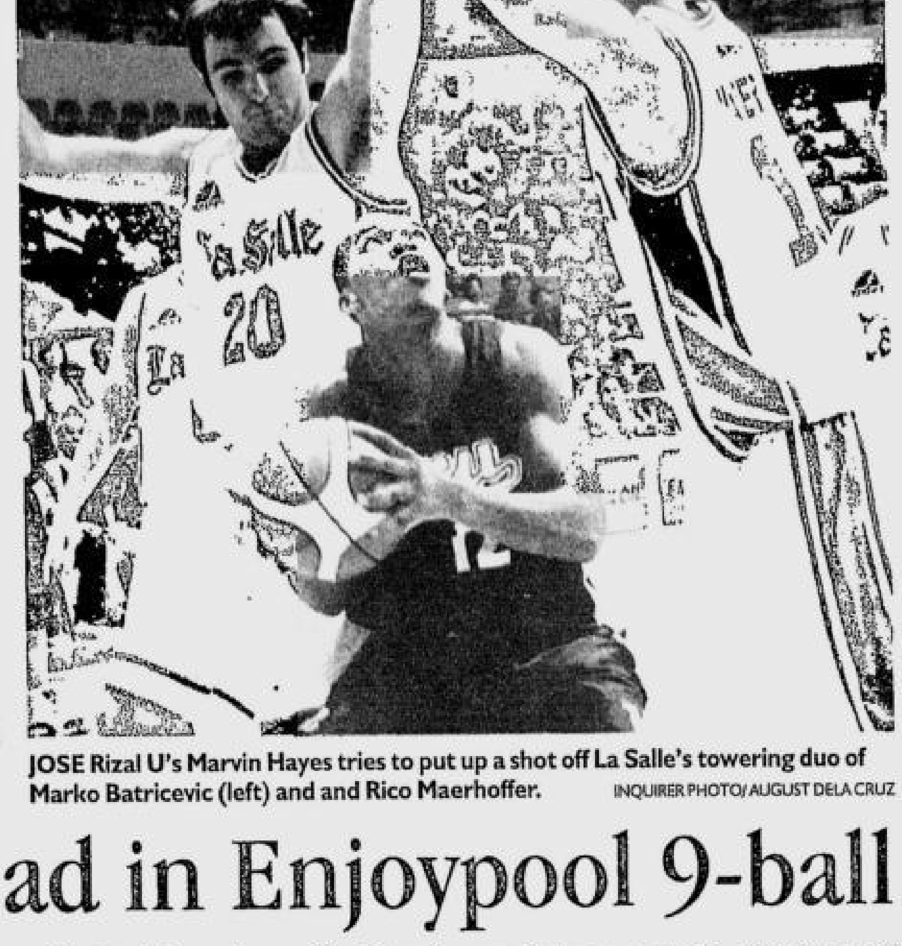
La Salle was led by Tang with 16 points while Rejan Lee and Cholo Villanueva chipped in 12 markers each.

The Scores:

JRU 82—Cagoco 23, Wilson 15, Hayes 11, Sena 9, Se 8, Nocom 6, Pradas 5, Bungahis 3, Cunanan 2, Kabigting 0.

LA SALLE 79—Tang 16, Lee 12, Villanueva 12, Co 7, Casio 6, Atkins 5, Ilad 5, Malabes 4, Mangahas 4, Cua 2, Walsham 0, Batricevic 0, Ferdinand 0.

Quarterscores: 18-21; 39-40; 59-65;82-79.



JOSE Rizal U's Marvin Hayes tries to put up a shot off La Salle's towering duo of Marko Batricevic (left) and and Rico Maerhoffer. INQUIRER PHOTO/ AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Pagadian five blasts Iloilo, ends Balgos double-D run

PAGADIAN CITY—THE PAGADIAN EXPLORERS moved up to solo third in the 2007 Spring Cooking Oil-NBC National Cup basketball tournament Friday by crushing the Toyota Iloilo Warriors, 86-77, at the city gym here.

John Villaver and Erian Daja combined for 41 points to power Mayor Sammy Co's Explorers to their sixth win in 10 games in the tournament supported by Sulpicio Lines, Yahoo Philippines, Spring Cooking Oil, San Miguel Beer, Caltex, Sun Cellular, Firefly Lightings, Trans Asia Shipping Lines, Molten, Nature's Spring, BasketballTV and Viva Prime Channel.

The Warriors of businessman Robert Uy suffered their ninth loss in 10 outings.

Warrior Ruel Balgos' string of double-double performances came to an end as he was outplayed by Daja at the post. Balgos managed to score only 11 points and grab five rebounds.

Pagadian opened up several double-digit leads and never looked back after surging to a 30-16 first-quarter lead.

The tourney takes a break to give way to the May 14 polls. It will resume play on May 22 with a pair of explosive games pitting Tagaytay Spring against Quezon Villa Anita and defending champion Ozamiz Cotta against Montaña Davao.

The scores:

PAGADIAN 86—Villaver 21, Daja 20, Orquillas 14, [illegible]pao 8, Saludsod 8, Pamaran 5, Cortez 5, Naron 3, Asaytono 0, Naguit 0, Quilo 0, Mamaclay 0, Arquero 0.

ILOILO 77—Senieres 18, Guanco 17, Laborte 15, Baglos 11, Leonida 7, Sina-on 4, Singco 4, Sencil 4, Cortel 1, Tizon 0.

Quarters: 30-16, 55-39, 70-55, 86-77

Django heads RP squad in Enjoypool 9-ball

FRANCISCO "DJANGO" BUSTAMANTE will spearhead a six-man Philippine squad that will challenge some of the world's best pool players in the 2007 Enjoypool.com (formerly Billiard Congress of America) 9-ball Championships beginning today at the Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Bustamante will be joined by Jose "Amang" Parica, Marlon Manalo, Santos Sambajon, Dennis Orcollo and Warren Kiamco.

The draw does not favor the Philippines though as a win by the 44-year-old Bustamante against American Jeremy Jones may pit him against Manalo early.

Manalo's opening foe is 2005 World Junior runner-up Hisashi Kusano of Japan.

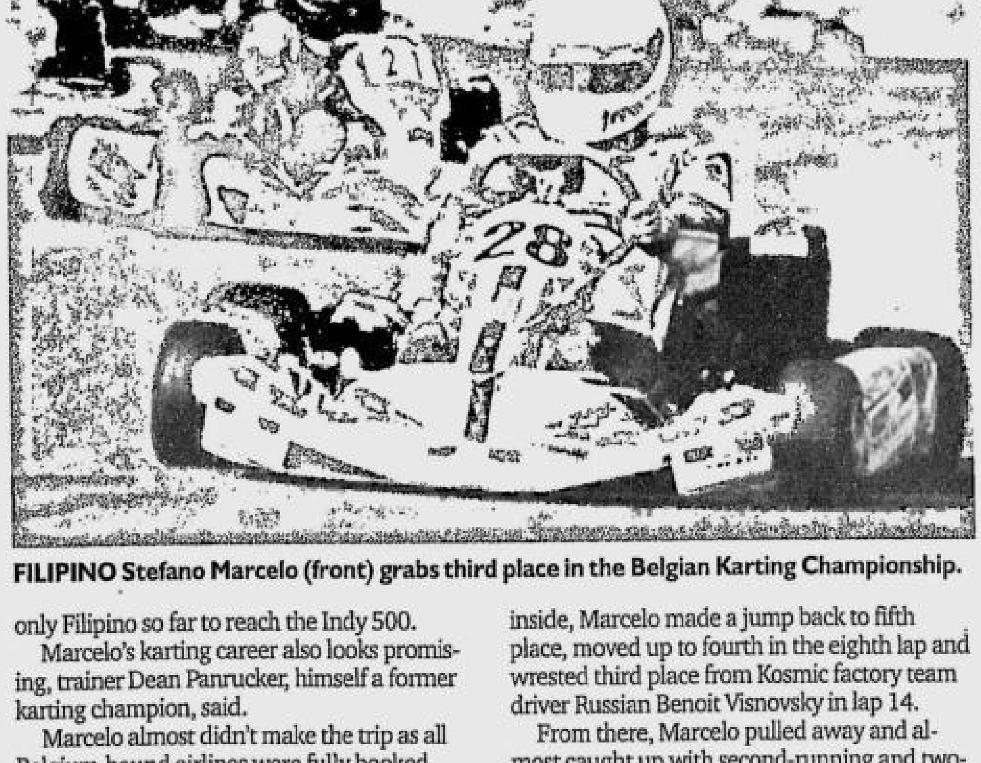
In other Enjoypool.com matches, Parica goes up against American Allen Hopkins, while Sambajon, winner of the Blaze 9-Ball Tour Stop #12 last May 6 at the Leisure Time Billiards in Levittown, New York, faces unheralded Bruce Wilkinson, also from the United States.

Orcollo clashes with David Reljic of Australia and Kiamco, the reigning US Bar table 9-ball and 8-ball champion, slugs it out with Brady Golan of Canada.

If he wins, Sambajon next faces the winner between ex-world champion Ralf "Kaiser" Souquet of Germany and "Madmax" Max Eberle of the US.

Bustamante, the former world No. 1 from Tarlac City and one of the players under the stable of RP billiards patron Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, recently topped the 5th Annual US Pro Tour Championship at the Normandie Casino in Los Angeles, California. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Marcelo follows in footsteps of man he never met



FILIPINO Stefano Marcelo (front) grabs third place in the Belgian Karting Championship.

JEAN STEFANO MARCELO WASN'T EVEN born yet when his uncle, the great Filipino race car driver Jovy, was making waves in different racing circuits here and overseas.

If only Jovy could see him now.

The 16-year-old Marcelo, racing for top Belgian team Kosmic, made history as the first Filipino to achieve a third-place finish in the recent Belgian Karting Championship Series at the Spa-Francorchamps Circuit, a regular venue of Formula One races.

It was a scene reminiscent of Jovy's glory days, according to John, Marcelo's father and the brother of the late car racer.

"We're proud to be able to raise the Philippine flag in that prestigious event," said the elder Marcelo, a former jetski champion and AF3 driver. "It just gives me the shivers that Stefano will be the one to carry on Jovy's legacy and I'll be looking forward to seeing that day."

Jovy died on May 15, 1992 while practicing for the Indianapolis 500-mile race at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. His car, a 1991 Lola Cosworth DFS, made a three-quarter spin and hit the outside wall, ending the promising career of the 27-year-old who was the first and only Filipino so far to reach the Indy 500.

Marcelo's karting career also looks promising, trainer Dean Panrucker, himself a former karting champion, said.

Marcelo almost didn't make the trip as all Belgium-bound airlines were fully booked. Thanks to friends and Department of Tourism Assistant Secretary Cynthia Carreon, the young racer was able to book two plane tickets.

Marcelo and Panrucker spent hours analyzing the Belgium track and when race day came, the determined youngster, starting from the back of the 28-man field, wound up 10th in the first heat and seventh in the next. He performed better in the gruelling 24-lap pre-final race where he managed to snatch fifth place.

The 24-lap final race started with the top 10 drivers cramming for positions. Sticking to the inside, Marcelo made a jump back to fifth place, moved up to fourth in the eighth lap and wrested third place from Kosmic factory team driver Russian Benoit Visnovsky in lap 14.

From there, Marcelo pulled away and almost caught up with second-running and two-time European champion Sami Luka of Italy.

Top Belgian karter and Kosmic teammate Ronnie Lattine won the event.

"I'm very much impressed, Stefano adapted to the intricate track conditions quicker than we expected," said Panrucker. "I believe this Filipino has big chances of making it big in the European karting scene."

Marcelo may have never seen the exploits of his uncle. But he has done a good job of keeping the memory of those achievements—and of Jovy himself—alive. *Inquirer Sports Staff*

SPORTSWATCH

Padyak Pinoy main Forum topic

THE 2007 EDITION OF THE PADYAK PINOY TOUR WILL BE THE FEATURED topic in tomorrow's PSA Forum at the main function room of the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila. The coaches and team captains of the 12 teams competing in the 10-lap cycling odyssey that hits the road on May 17 are appearing in the public sports program aired live over dzSR Sports Radio 918 and sponsored by Pagcor, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and son Arnold "Ali" Atienza. Joining them in the forum that begins at 10:30 a.m. are Philippine National Cycling Association president Paquito Rivas; Gary Cayton, president of the organizing Dynamic Outsource Solutions, Inc (Dos-1); and Larry Li, advertising manager of Tour presenter Tanduay.

Sportswriter's mom dies

VIRGINIA CUDAL LACHICA, A RETIRED TEACHER FROM KORONADAL Comprehensive High School and mother of Bulletin sports deskman Rey Virgilio Lachica, died in the morning of May 13 in Koronadal City in South Cotabato. She was 73. She is survived by children Rodrigo Lachica Jr. and Joy, Rey Virgilio and Anessa, Cherry, and Roy Bayani and Christine. Her body lies in state at the family residence in 3A Datu Piang St. Koronadal City. Interment is on May 19 at the Koronadal Valley Eternal Garden.

Submission of Roligon derby entries set

OFFICIAL ENTRIES IN THE "SUMMER HEAT" 4-COCK DERBY WITH corresponding weights of from 1.8 kilograms to 2.4 kg must be submitted on Tuesday at the Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque City. Entries will be listed from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Slated on May 16, 18 and 21, the derby is hosted by promoters Danny Ty and Aba Badiola, who have the backing of cockers and breeders from different provinces. The champions will win a guaranteed prize of P1.3 million. For inquiries, call 851-2275; 833 -1638 and 852- 9812.

3 'Rambulan' champs post perfect scores

THREE PARTICIPANTS POSTED PERFECT SCORES OF EIGHT WINS EACH to emerge as co-champions in the National Rambulan 8-Cock Derby last Saturday night at the San Juan Coliseum. The champions—Sammy Uy of Davao with his entry SCU DD Davao, Boy de Roca and Rio Salceda of Bicol (BMR II) and Allan Siaco (Angelie) earned the distinction of topping a record field of 978 entries. Toto Que (Alpha), Mayor Conrado Nicart (CUN) and entries San Jose and Krystal missed the crown by half a point. Promoter Rodolfo Pineda said the 9-cock 2008 Rambulan will be held in January.

MAKING BETTER KIDS: Team sports like football teaches kids lessons in leadership and cooperation and makes them feel they belong. The Milo-sponsored Summer Sports Clinics, now on its 25th year, imparts the basics of sports in an effective, scientific way. Held from March to May, the clinics features courses in various sports. For inquiries, call the Milo hotline at (02) 914-7111.

Prenza volleybelles post twin kill; UST scores

PRENZA HIGH SCHOOL CAME AWAY WITH two victories over the weekend in bracket B and grabbed the limelight in the Shakey's Girls Volleyball Invitational League at the Blue Eagle Gym in Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

Led by Jenylyn Reyes and Megami Bendijo, Prenza downed last year's finalist Colegio San Agustin, 22-25, 25-20, 25-15, Saturday and Roosevelt College, 25-22, 25-20, yesterday.

University of Santo Tomas also posted its second straight victory in Bracket C, routing Holy Family School, 25-11, 25-15, behind the Tigress trio of Aerieal Patnongon, Maruja Banaticla and Kim Fajardo.

St. Francis of Assisi, spearheaded by 5-foot-10 junior Alexis Tatlonghari and setter Jana Nieves, crushed San Beda Alabang, 25-15, 25-19, in Bracket D.

In other games, Hope Christian School outplayed Imus Institute, 25-10, 25-18, in Bracket C while E. Rondon High School blasted Holy Spirit-Quezon City, 25-10, 25-10.

The top two teams from the four brackets will advance to the quarterfinals of this event sponsored by Shakey's Pizza, Toby's Sports, Mikasa, Asics and Air Philippines.

Shelly C. Dimaculangan

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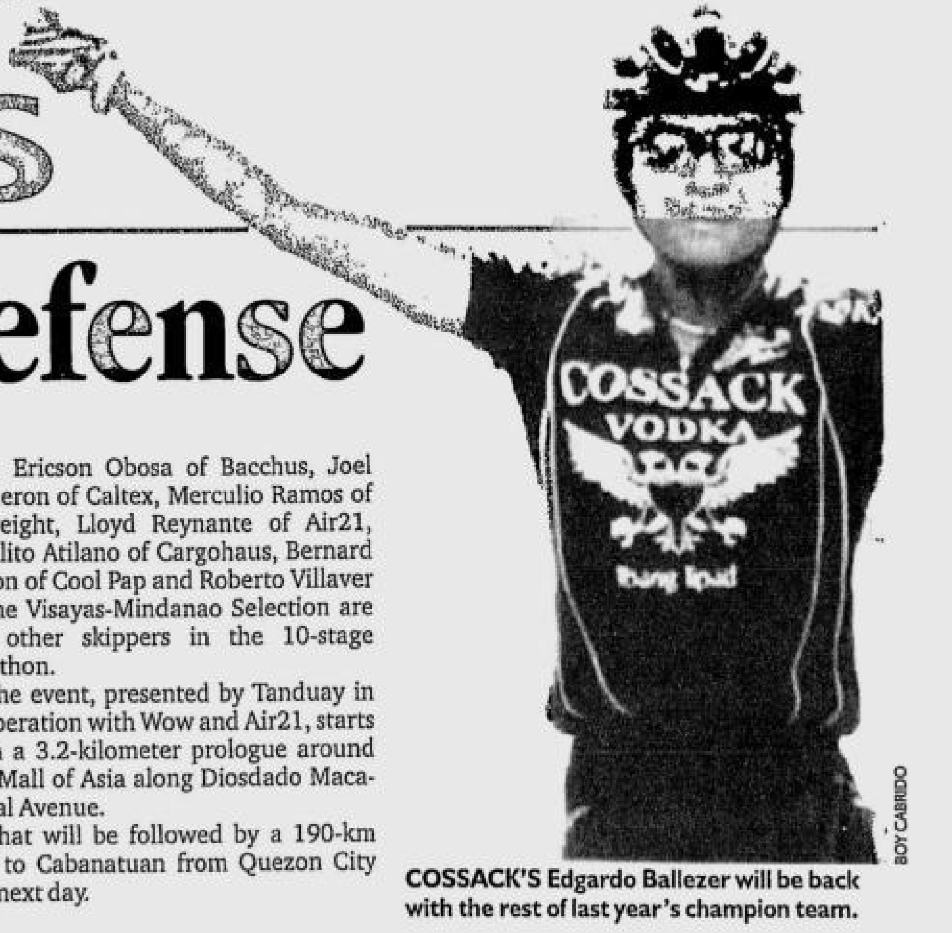
SPORTS

Cossack in for tough defense



COSSACK'S Edgardo Ballezer will be back with the rest of last year's champion team. BOY CABRIDO

By Musong R. Castillo

EVEN WITH AN INTACT LINEUP, DEFENDING PADYAK PINOY TEAM CHAMPIon Cossack Vodka will have its hands full in its quest for a repeat when the annual summer spectacle on wheels pedals off on Thursday.

Unlike last year when practically no one gave it a second look, Cossack will be a marked squad this time around and the team will have to conquer a longer and more punishing route.

"We can never be too sure," Cossack coach Renato Dolosa, a veteran of many Tours and a former two-time champion, said in Filipino.

"The route is longer and the other teams have beefed up (their lineups). Looks like it (team race) will be wide open."

Former champions are also on the roster to skipper separate teams, boosting the stock of Cossack's opponents.

Champion skipper

Defending individual champion Santy Barnachea will lead the Champion squad.

Cossack, which trained in high altitude as early as February, will be bannered by skipper Renato Sambrano. He will be backed by Michael Reyes, Roberto Torres, Nilo Jasul, Leonel Dimaano, Edgardo Ballezer, Eli Camarino and last year's top rookie, Irish Valenuela.

Former Tour winners

Victor Espiritu, who won the fabled Marlboro Tour as a rookie in the late 1990s, will be the captain of Wow Magic Sing, with Arnel Quirimit, the winner of the Tour revival in 2003, spearheading Mail and More.

Veteran Frederick Feliciano of Vellum, Ericson Obosa of Bacchus, Joel Calderon of Caltex, Merculio Ramos of U-Freight, Lloyd Reynante of Air21, Emelito Atilano of Cargohaus, Bernard Luzon of Cool Pap and Roberto Villaver of the Visayas-Mindanao Selection are the other skippers in the 10-stage bikathon.

The event, presented by Tanduay in cooperation with Wow and Air21, starts with a 3.2-kilometer prologue around the Mall of Asia along Diosdado Macapagal Avenue.

That will be followed by a 190-km run to Cabanatuan from Quezon City the next day.

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SHAKEY'S V-LEAGUE

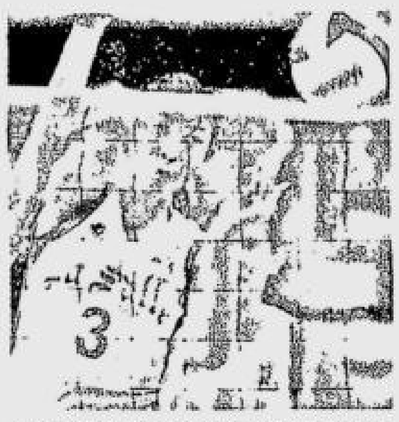
La Salle's proud lady spikers hard-pressed to nail '4-peat'

WITHOUT TWO OF THE STALWARTS of its "three-peat" champion team, La Salle is facing an uphill battle in its bid to extend its domination of the Shakey's V-League which unfurls on May 17 at The Arena in San Juan.

And with inaugural champion University of Santo Tomas back in the fold and both San Sebastian College and Far Eastern University raring to stamp their class, a wide open race for the crown is seen in the fourth season of the country's premier women's volley league sponsored by Shakey's Pizza.

"We've lost some of our starters who were vital cogs in our three championship runs and we haven't played that much because of the (UAAP) suspension," said Oliver Almandro, deputy to La Salle coach Ramil de Jesus.

"We're the underdogs now instead of the favorites."



STILL SOLID: Lady Archers RYAN LIM

The Taft Avenue spikers lost two of its top players—former UAAP MVP Desiree Hernandez and many-time Best Libero awardee Sharmaine Penano—to graduation, leaving Manilla Santos, Chi Saet, Carla Llaguno, Michelle Datuin, Jacklyn Alarca and new recruit Amy Guanco to pick up the tab for the three-time champions.

It also didn't help that Santos, a power spiker, and Saet, one of the league's top setters, joined team practices only recently due to academic pressure.

La Salle will parade a new Thai import in Areerat Sanorseang, who took over from compatriot Kanchana Jindarat, who will now play for Ateneo.

"She (Sanorseang) is more of a middle and utility spiker, unlike Kanchana who is an open spiker," said Almandro.

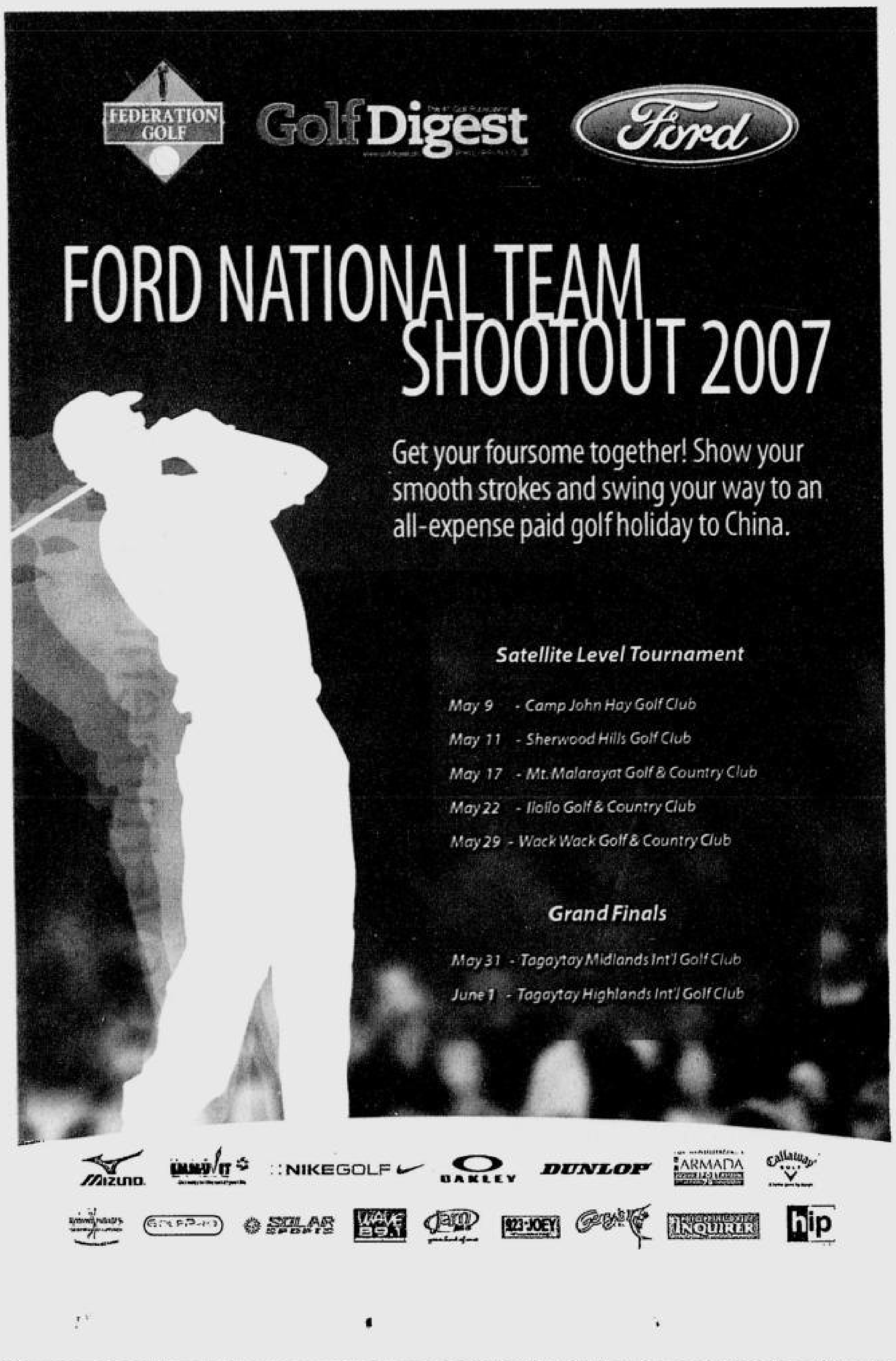
Charlene Cruz, Celine Hernandez, Kay Martinez and Icel Lopez are the newcomers in the squad.

Almandro points to reigning UAAP champion UST—which beat La Salle in the Shakey's V-League inaugural in 2004 but opted to skip the last conference so it could beef up the squad—as the team to watch.

San Sebastian, the losing finalist last conference, and Far Eastern are also certified contenders along with Letran, which will be backed by the sister tandem of former league MVP Michelle and Mayette Carolino.

Other teams seeing action in the event backed by Mikasa and Accel are Lyceum and Adamson.

NBN-4 will telecast the games—which will be played every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday—from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Sunday.



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Grand Finals
May 31 - Tagaytay Midlands Int'l Golf Club
June 1 - Tagaytay Highlands Int'l Golf Club
MIZUNO NIKEGOLF OAKLEY DUNLOP ARMADA Callaway SOLAR SPORTS INQUIRER hip

4 Metro schools, Balayan team share t'kwondo 'Face' spotlight

FAR EASTERN, UP DILIMAN, ATENEO, LYCEUM and Balayan's Montea squad grabbed two senior gold medals apiece to share the limelight in the recent Petron/Smart Face of the Year taekwondo championships held at the Rizal Coliseum.

FEU's Emmanuel Paulite and Ken Cariaga triumphed in the flyweight and bantam/feather classes, respectively, of the men's advance competition; UP's Sheena Perlas and Justin Galvez prevailed in the bantam/feather and light/heavy groups of the women's and men's advance events; and Lyceum's Majah Ballesteros (fin/bantam) and Zaira April Crisostomo (feather/heavy) scored in the women's senior novice tilt.

Ateneo's John Fero Regino (bantam) and Mican Lorenz Geraldez (feather/heavy) topped the men's senior novice, while Montea's Aleksa Alferez and Richard Moreno, both fin, won in women's advance and men's novice, respectively.

Other senior winners: Kristine Manapsal of Davao (fly), women's advance; Ryan Tibay of EJAL Powerkick (fin), Stewart delos Santos of Central Gym (fly), men's novice.

Junior men (advance)—Roel de Leon, fin-fly, S&A; JR Divinafior, feather SSC-R; Joseph Dolanso, bantam, PNU; Allen Roy Ungson, light, Ateneo; Renz Masumbol, wel-light-middle, Villasol TKD; Bernabe Canoso, mid-heavy, SSC-R; (novice)—RR Castrogeres, fin-fly, Montea; Jonathan Eugenia, bantam, Powerkick; Robert Masumbol, feather, Villasol; Cris John Nanglihan, light-wel, Ilugao; and Jogn David Magtira, light mid-heavy, St. James.

Junior women (advance)—Leigh Nuguid, fin-fly, Silang TKD; Mira Taculog, bantam-feather, DPS; Ynah Langit, light-welter, Centro; Raychelle Estureo, light mid-heavy, PTC; (novice)— Yolemy Garcia, fin-bantam, SMACC; Mnemosyne Razalan, feather, CSA; Stephanie Pateros, light, S&A; Fely Marlyn Ognayon welter-light middle, Hugduan; and Gabriela Rayos, middle-heavy, LICS.

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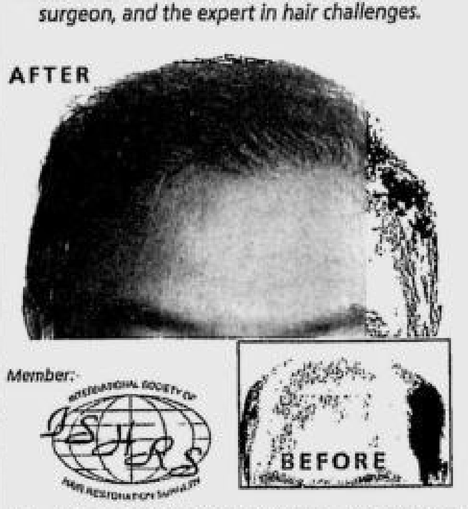

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Rivero, Go head 16 RP jins vying in world meet

ASIAN GAMES SILVER MEDALISTS MARIE Antointte Rivero and Thsomlee Go head the star-studded Smart/Petron Philippine taekwondo team seeing action in the 2007 World Taekwondo Championships from May 18 to 22 in Beijing.

Around 80 to 100 countries are expected to vie for honors in the prestigious event, according to Philippine Taekwondo Association president Robert N. Aventajado.

Among the favorites are South Korea, China, France, Spain, Iran, Chinese Taipei and Turkey.

The Philippines is also considered a strong contender in the championships.

Aside from lightweight Rivero and flyweight Go, 14 other members of the national squad which is training for various international competitions, including the Olympic Games qualifiers in London, will see action.

They are John Paul Lizardo and Kathleeen Eunice Alora, fin; Jeffrey Figueroa and Loraine Lorelie Catalan, fly; Sabrina Jo Simbulan, fly; Manuel Rivero Jr. and Kirstie Elaine Alora, feather; Donald David Geisler III, light; Michael Angelo Realisa and Veronica Domingo, welter; Alexander Briones and Ma. Criselda Roxas, middle; and Michael Alejandrino and Katherine Ann Bunyi, heavy.

Aventajado will be the delegation head. The other officials are Jesus Morales III, manager; Roberto Cruz, men's coach; Raul Samson, women's coach; Sebastian Ma. Martin Ripoll, delegate; and Roland Campos, international referee.

MONDAY, MAY 14, 2007

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BUSINESS

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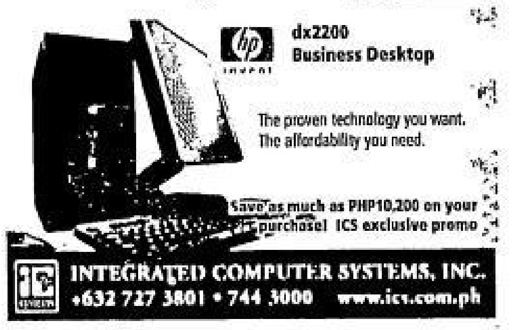

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Gov't debt stood at ₱3.9T in end-February

Down 1.7% from level a year ago

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT's debt reached P3.9 trillion in end-February, rising by 0.6 percent from a month ago as the government borrowed more to finance spending that could not be covered by its insufficient revenues.

But the government's end-February debt was 1.7-percent lower than the P3.96 trillion recorded in the same month last year.

The latest debt figure, if divided among the estimated 87 million Filipinos, means each would have a share of P44,793 in the national government's obligations.

Documents from the Bureau of the Treasury showed that of the P3.9-trillion debt, P1.73 trillion was owed to foreign creditors while P2.16 trillion was sourced from local lenders.

The domestic debt reflected a 1.1-percent increase from the previous month's level. The

GOV'T/ B2

INDICATORS

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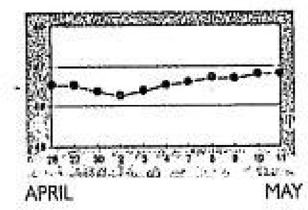

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

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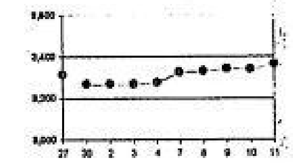
As of 5 p.m., May 11, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Traders await conduct of elections

TRADERS ARE BETTING ON A RALLY PROvided there is a peaceful conduct of the national elections this week.

"We expect the market to test the previous 52-week high reached in mid-February as investors position for a relief rally post-elections," said Paul Joseph Garcia, chief investment officer of ING Investment Management.

Fitzgerald Aclan, chief strategist at BDO Trust, added that the market was likely to sustain its run-up barring any "bad incidents" during the voting today.

In a weekly note, AB Capital Securities said the index managed to break out of the 3,300-mark with the help of strong first-earnings results reported by major blue-chip issues. The market, however, paused at the 3,350 resistance level as investors remained sidelined with an extended weekend brought by the official holiday today.

TRADERS/ B4

IN THIS ISSUE

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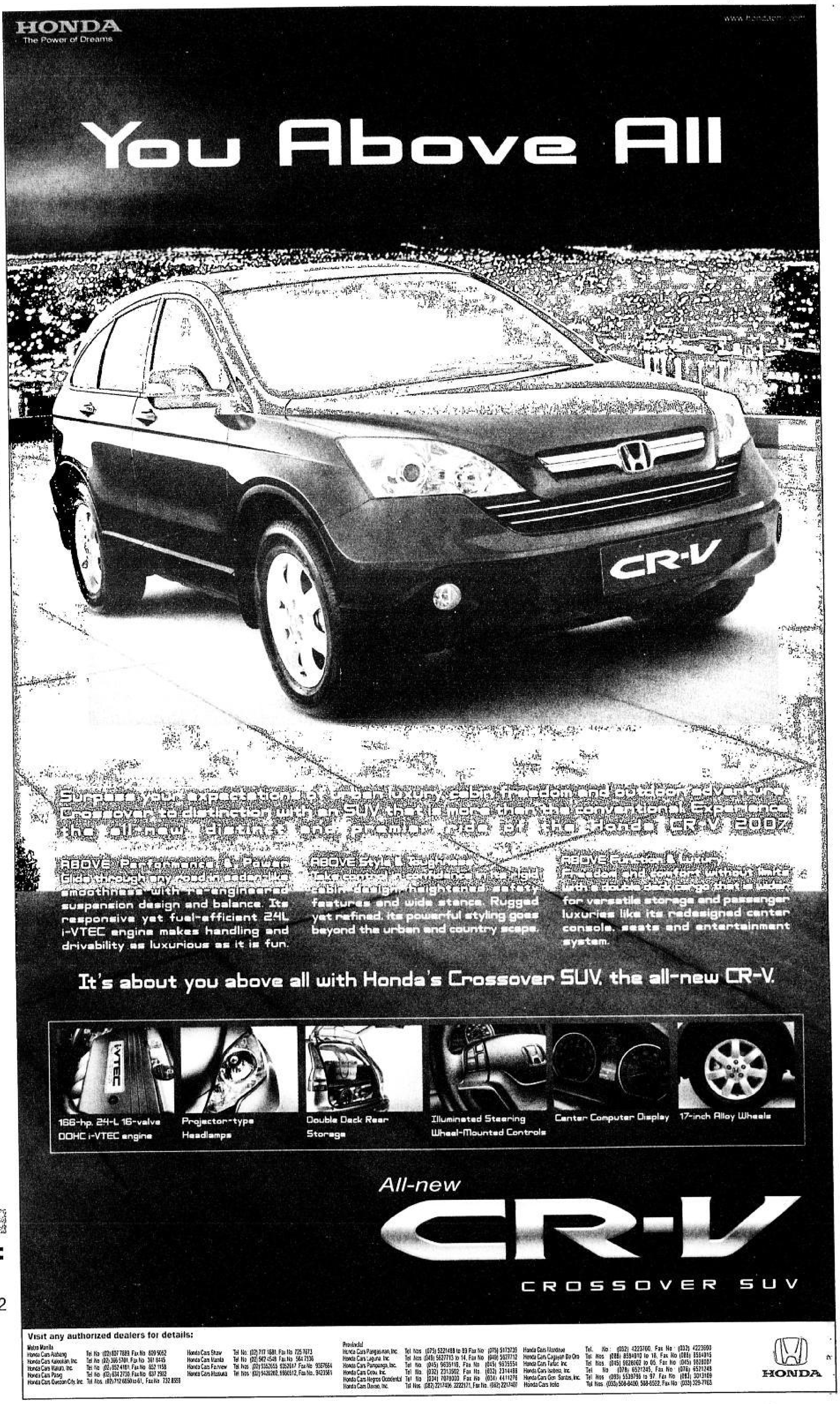
■ **Banking sector** bad loan ratio down to 5.28% /B10



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PEANUT-BUTTER maker Jennilyn Antonio (left) from Laguna, winner of the 2007 Citi Microentrepreneur of the Year Awards "Maunlad" category, is joined by Citi country officer Sanjiv Vohra and Tessie Sy-Coson of SM Investment's Corp. during the awarding ceremonies held recently. *(See Story on Page B6.)* RUDY ESPERAS

20 agricultural ecozones identified; DA pushes more infra projects

By Amy Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULture is speeding up the farm sector's infrastructure development by putting up special agriculture ecozones, tramlines and processing and packaging facilities all over the country in a bid to sustain growth.

"We will encourage the private sector to invest by putting up ports, including postharvest and storage facilities in the ecozones," Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said during the Philippine International Logistics Conference held last week.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila earlier reported that the Department of Trade and Industry was working with the DA to put up ecozones to ensure sufficient food supply especially during the rainy season.

Yap said that like in existing export processing zones, locators in agricultural ecozones would be granted certain incentives such as income tax holiday and duty-free importation of capital equipment.

These ecozones will have storage facilities and processing equipment for agricultural products.

"Initially, we have identified 20 zones as prime candidates, which include Casiguran Bay in Aurora for mariculture; Ifugao for semi temperate crops and Isabela," Yap said.

Other potential sites included areas in and near Clark and Subic as well as areas that have existing ports and airports.

Meanwhile, the DA, together with farmers' groups, municipal governments and Dole Asia, recently established a P9-million vegetable and fruit semi-processing and packaging facility in La Trinidad, Benguet.

The construction of the facility is part of DA's national cold chain program, which is aimed at reducing postharvest losses.

The facility will extend the freshness and quality of vegetables, fruits and other high-value crops, and transport these products to wholesale and retail markets.

"We have set up four pilot cold chain program models, covering production areas to high-end urban markets in Metro Manila, Cebu City and Davao City. The four routes are Benguet-Manila, Cagayan-Manila, Visayas-Manila, Visayas inter-island connections and Mindanao-Cebu-Manila," Yap said.

Another project is the construction of tramlines in Benguet, Iloilo, Laguna and Nueva Ecija.

"Tramline is a technology we introduced in isolated, yet productive farming areas where there are no farm-to-market roads or bridges," said Yap.

Like cable cars that transport people, tramlines are used to haul agricultural products to the nearest road, he explained.

To further maintain unhampered supply of farm and fishery products to Metro Manila, the DA has earlier negotiated with the Metro Manila Development Authority to exempt food vehicles from the truck ban and number-coding scheme.

Food vehicles must first be accredited by the DA and MMDA to avail themselves of the Food Lane Pass stickers.

The DA has also forged arrangements with the provincial governments of Laguna, Batangas, Quezon and Cavite, to exempt food delivery trucks and vans from paying the road user's tax.

What slows BOT projects down?

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

SOMETHING INTERESTING HAPPENED at a very well-attended public hearing held by the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) last week. The hearing concerned the most recent round of proposed amendments to the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer) Law, the law governing private sector participation in public infrastructure provision.

This is the law that permitted independent power producers to rescue us from drastic power shortages in the early 1990s, when the government didn't have the money to build the power plants itself. It is the same law that brought us the Skyway from Magallanes to Bicutan, and the improvement of both the North and South Tollways out of Metro Manila, at no cost to the government. It also made it possible for Manila Water Co. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. to provide water supply services to the eastern and western parts of Metro Manila, respectively, which led—at least in the case of Manila Water—to a phenomenal improvement in quantity and quality of water services within the 10 years the private concessions have been in place.

Cutting its own arm

Neda found itself in the awkward position of seemingly pushing for revisions to the BOT guidelines that would actually cut off its own arm—by taking away its own critical role in the evaluation and approval of BOT projects. It is now open knowledge that the revisions did not come from Neda, but are in fact being pushed by Malacañang. Accounts have it that the President herself has asserted that as Senate author of the BOT Law in the early 90s, she had never meant for each BOT project to be scrutinized by Neda and the inter-agency Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) chaired by the secretary of finance. Thus, she wanted the guidelines "corrected" to reflect this intent.

The premise, faulty as it may be, is that the ICC/Neda evaluation of individual BOT projects has been an unnecessary hurdle that gets in the way of attracting more private sector investments in our much-needed infrastructure facilities. The proposed solution? Let the implementing agencies be responsible for evaluating and approving their own BOT projects. By removing a layer of approval by an oversight body, more private sector investments in BOT will come in, BOT projects will move much faster, and we will all be happier, right?

Faulty premise

Well, not quite.

The speaker from the World Bank pointed out that what really slows down BOT projects in the country are factors arising from lack of rigorous project preparation and appraisal, including by oversight agencies. Such lack has opened the way for anomalous contracts and corruption within implementing agencies, ultimately leading to delays due to court litigation and endless legal impediments. Naia 3 is the most notorious example.

The lawyer from the private sector said essentially the same thing: Private BOT investors want a process that will withstand any future legal, financial, technical and procedural concern that may be raised against a project or its proponents. I volunteered my own observation from my past Neda days, pointing to factors after approval as the more crucial sources of delay. I recalled how certain high-profile projects for which Neda received strong pressure to accelerate the evaluation and approval process subsequently languished after approval anyway, due to financing, right-of-way, or legal delays especially from lawsuits by losing bidders. In other words, we hurried up for nothing.

Will eliminating oversight evaluation and approval by ICC help the situation, then? Will we be ensured of this critically needed rigorous appraisal by leaving it to the agencies proposing the projects to do it? Isn't there likely to be a conflict of interest here? It doesn't take a genius to answer this one.

Priority projects

Past Neda chief Dante Canlas called attention to a curious revision being proposed that would delete reference to the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan, the Medium Term Public Investment Program, the Regional Development Investment Programs and LGU development plans in defining priority projects. The proposed revision would give agencies full leeway in defining their list of priority projects—regardless of agreed and well-deliberated development priorities already articulated in the above plans.

This smells like a naked attempt to open the door even wider to unsolicited BOT projects—the exceptional case provided in the BOT Law that became the norm in past years rather than the exception. Delay-causing controversies have consistently hounded such unsolicited BOTs. Thus, in past wide public consultations on amendments to the same IRR (which were quietly swept aside by Malacañang in favor of these latest revisions), there was strong sentiment that we move away from unsolicited BOTs and have more solicited ones where the government prepares the detailed project documents according to its needs and priorities. And yet Malacañang wants to move in exactly the opposite direction.

I said it during the hearing, and I'll say it again here: These proposed revisions do not appear to reflect a desire to streamline the BOT process for the sake of the public interest, including that of the private investors, but for the sake of certain particular interests who want to avoid the often-difficult questions asked by the ICC—for obvious reasons.

Comments are welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

Gov't prods private firms to help cut farm wastage

By Amy R. Remo

LOGISTICS INEFFICIENCY IS ONE among agriculture's biggest stumbling block. It is also one of the main reasons why farmers lack market access and why prices of agricultural commodities are four or five times higher than their farm gate prices.

"Logistics providers are key players in the food supply equation to effectively reduce handling, storage and transport costs in order to maximize profits of producers as well as bring down food prices for consumers," Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said during the Philippine International Logistics Conference held Friday.

Yap said the government's efforts to increase production of farm and fishery products would be useless if food prices remained high and if farmers and fishers were not earning enough.

"Logistics form part of one of our five major pillars: market access," he added.

The DA aims to effectively link farmers directly to its consumers in its bid to open more markets for farmers and, in the process, streamline the food supply chain.

It has opened four major public markets—on Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City, in Pasig, Muntinlupa and in Marikina—making them drop-off centers for farmers' produce.

"In fact, we envision a synchronized logistics system, involving the government and the private sector, as part of our national food and grains highway," Yap said.

Having an efficient vegetable supply chain, Yap added, could reduce postharvest losses from the farm to the markets. To date, postharvest losses range between 15 and 42 percent, according to studies made by the Bureau of Postharvest Research and Extension (BPRE).

For instance, last year's combined gross production of five major vegetables—eggplant, tomato, onion, cabbage and garlic—amounted to P9.3 billion. Postharvest losses for these vegetables were estimated to be worth at least P1.4 billion. Recovering such a huge wastage would have made available additional supply and reduced prices in the market.

Yap also urged producers and processors, particularly those from Mindanao and the Visayas, to use the roll-on, roll-off (Ro-Ro) transport system or the "Strong Republic Nautical Highway" routes to ferry their produce to major markets in Luzon and Metro Manila. Several existing Ro-Ro services cover four major lines: western, west central, central, and eastern nautical highways. The most traveled routes include Batangas-Calapan, Roxas-Caticlan, Iloilo-Bacolod, Dumaguete-Dapitan, Matnog-Allen and Liloan-Lipata.

While the Ro-Ro system is a cheaper alternative, a farmer would need strong logistics partners to ensure that the produce is shipped properly. This will help reduce wastages and prices of these commodities in Metro Manila markets.

"Having third-party logistics is very critical in ensuring effective linkages between farmers and markets, adequate food supply, and reduced prices for consumers," said Yap.

Philippine National Bank

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 29, 2007 at 8:00 a.m. at the Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pablo Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila.

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice of Meeting and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2006 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on May 30, 2006
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2006
5. Approval of the 2006 Annual Report
6. Approval of the Amendment of the Articles of Incorporation to withhold the stockholders' pre-emptive right to subscribe to any new or additional shares of the Bank
7. Ratification of All Acts, Resolutions and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2006 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
8. Election of Directors
9. Appointment of External Auditor
10. Other Matters
11. Adjournment

Minutes of the 2006 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as resolutions of the Board of Directors from May 31, 2006 will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of April 30, 2007 will be entitled to notice of, and vote at, this meeting. Registration will begin at 6:00 a.m.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 24, 2007. Any proxies so received will be validated by the Bank's Corporate Secretary on May 25, 2007, 9:30 a.m., at the Office of the Stock Transfer Agent at Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, February 16, 2007

RENATO J. FERNANDEZ
Corporate Secretary

Gov't debt stood at P3.9T in end-February

From page B1

slight increase in domestic debt was partly accounted for by the higher amount of government securities issued and direct loans contracted.

The foreign liabilities represented a 0.1-percent increase from the end-January level. The Treasury said the amount of foreign debt rose with the minimal increase in direct loans availed of by national government agencies and an increase in relending to state-owned firms.

The national government's contingent liabilities, meanwhile, stood at P561 billion, 0.3-percent lower than the P563.3 billion recorded the previous month.

Contingent liabilities are debts incurred by state-owned companies that carry a sovereign guarantee. In case of default by the borrowing entity, a contingent debt would be shouldered by the national government.

The drop in the amount of contingent liabilities was due to debt payments by government entities.

Of the contingent liabilities of the national government, P72.1 billion is owed to local creditors while P489.3 billion is owed to foreign lenders, data from the Treasury showed.

NDC eyes ₱2-B bond float for PNR project

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE STATE-OWNED NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT Co. is considering a P2-billion bond float to support countryside infrastructure initiatives, particularly the project of Philippine National Railways.

NDC general manager Ditas Rebueno said there was no definite plan yet although an issuance could be scheduled toward the end of the year.

Rebueno said the amount would be used for PNR's rail linkage project, but added that NDC was still preparing documentation for the bond float and would still choose an underwriter.

The rail link is envisioned to be the key to the development of Central and Southern Luzon as it was conceived to restore, rehabilitate and modernize the existing lines of the PNR.

The project is expected to provide effective and efficient means of transportation to and from Metro Manila and the provinces of Northern and Southern Luzon.

The project comprises two major systems—the North Luzon Railway System Project or Northrail and the South Luzon Railway System Project or Southrail.

Northrail will provide fast and reliable mass transit system for the 80.29-km span from Caloocan City to Clark in Pampanga.

Southrail will run the 65.9-km span from Caloocan City to Calamba in Laguna.

According to the PNR, the rehabilitation of the south railway system alone would benefit an estimated 200,000 passengers daily aside from providing interconnection service to the Northrail in Caloocan City going to Malolos, Bulacan.

PNR said the implementation of the program marked the start of the long-distance train services that would link Metro Manila to the Bicol region up to Matnog, Sorsogon.

The Manila-Bicol line will eventually link Luzon to the roll-on roll-off Strong Republic Nautical Highway system.

NDC was given the authority to issue bonds

NDC EYES/ B4

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Sucat plant may be revived

By Abigail L. Ho

THE STATE-OWNED power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. will decide by next year whether to auction the decommissioned 850-megawatt (MW) Sucat thermal power plant or to rehabilitate it in case no new capacity is put up in the Luzon grid prior to the 2010 critical period.

PSALM vice president Froilan Tampinco said the decision would have to be made by next year as the government agency would also have to set schedules for the auction of National Power Corp.'s retired power plants.

So far, he said PSALM has not set any schedules for the Sucat plant auction as the decision would have to be made first on what exactly would be done with it.

In an earlier interview, Tampinco said the decision should be made as soon as possible as the gestation period required to repower the decommissioned plant had to be taken into consideration.

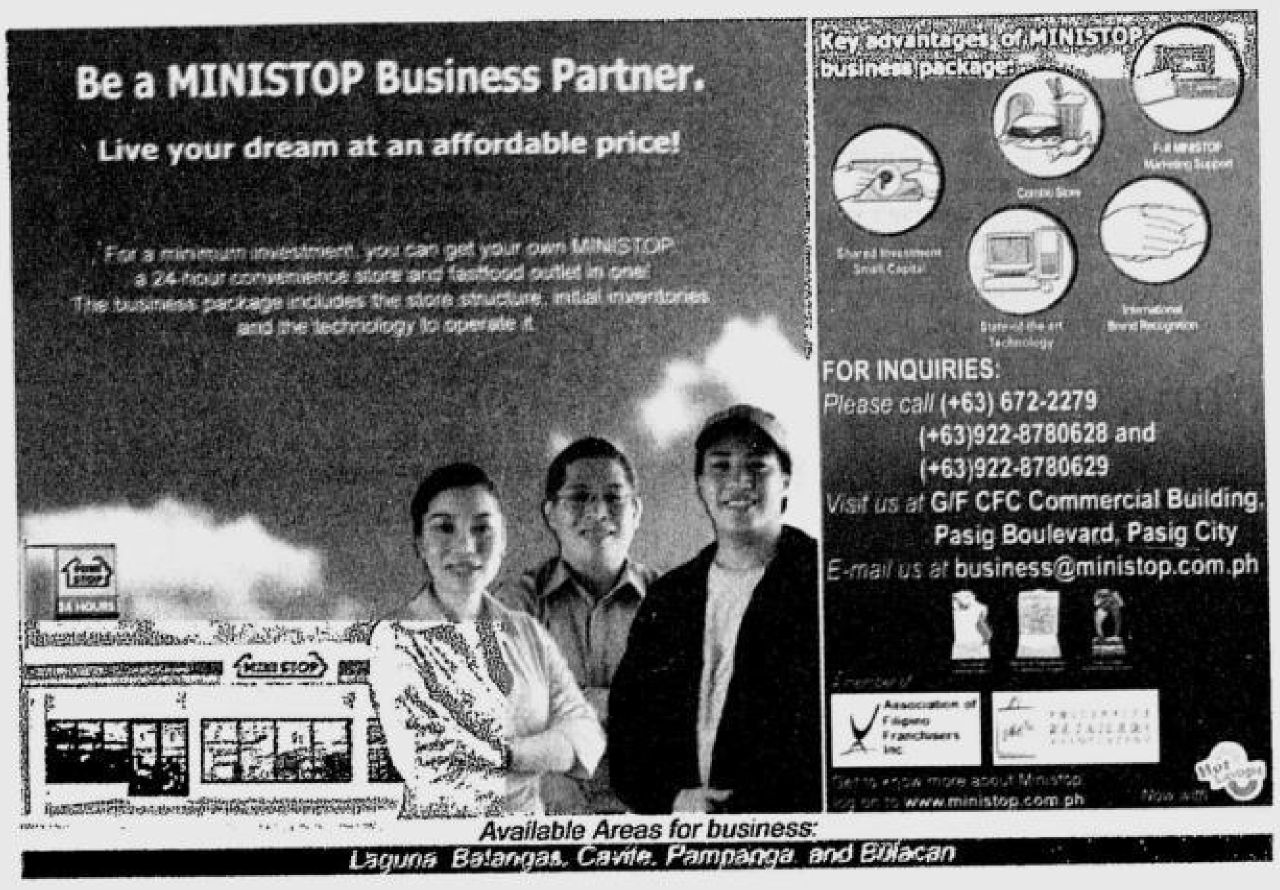
The decision on whether to sell or repower the plant was originally slated to be made within this year.

He said an option that PSALM could take was to bid out the retired Napocor facility, with the condition that the winning bidder should fire up two units of the plant.

The new owner of the plant could also choose to put up a new unit, he said. This would serve as additional new capacity for the Luzon grid.

Converting the Sucat plant was also considered as an option, but he admitted that this would be very costly.

The Sucat plant would also be the anchor load for PNOC Exploration Corp.'s $100-million BatMan-1 natural gas pipeline project, which would enable members of the industrial, commercial, transport and residential sectors to tap the natural gas from the Malampaya deepwater gas-to-power project in Palawan.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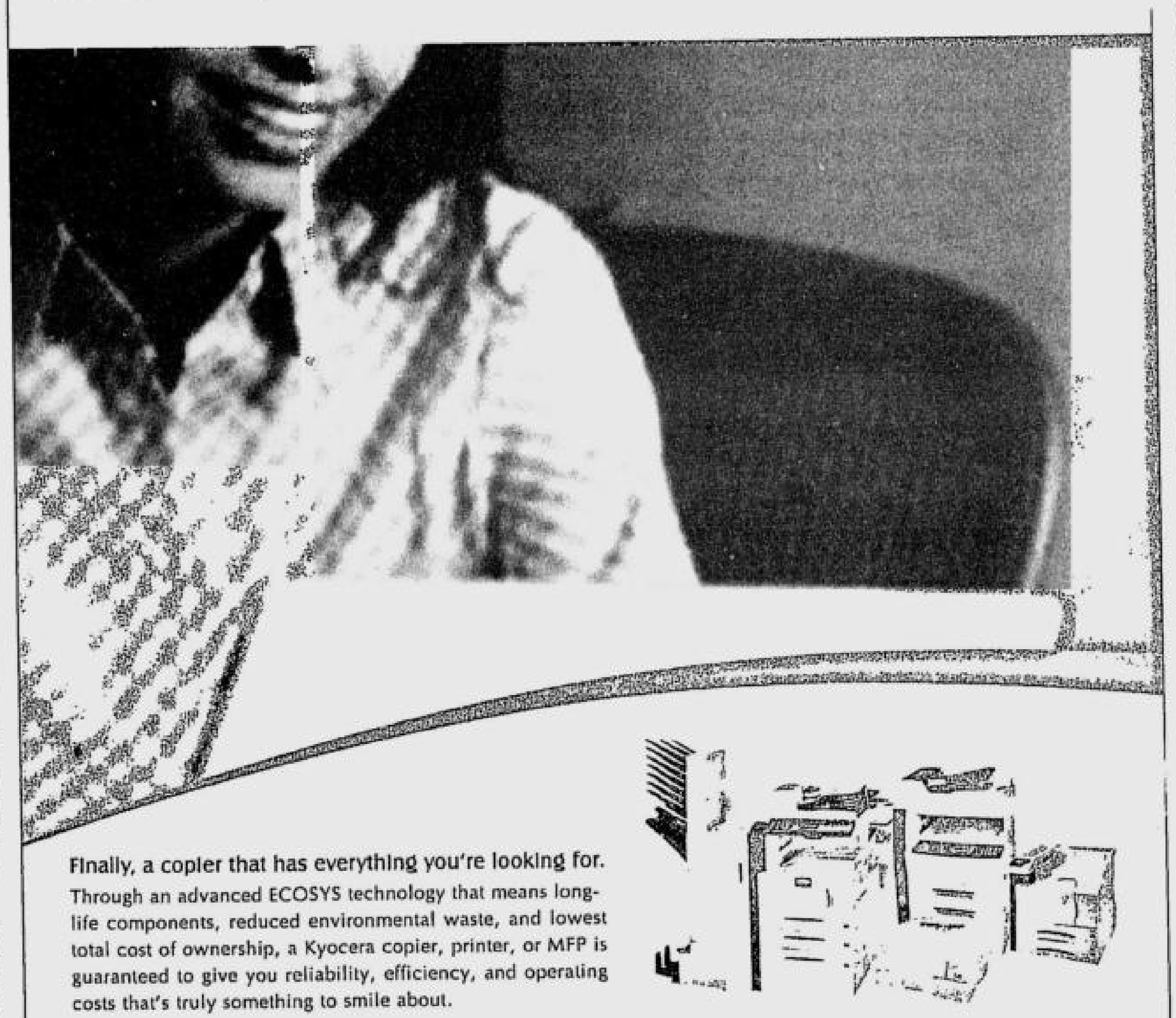

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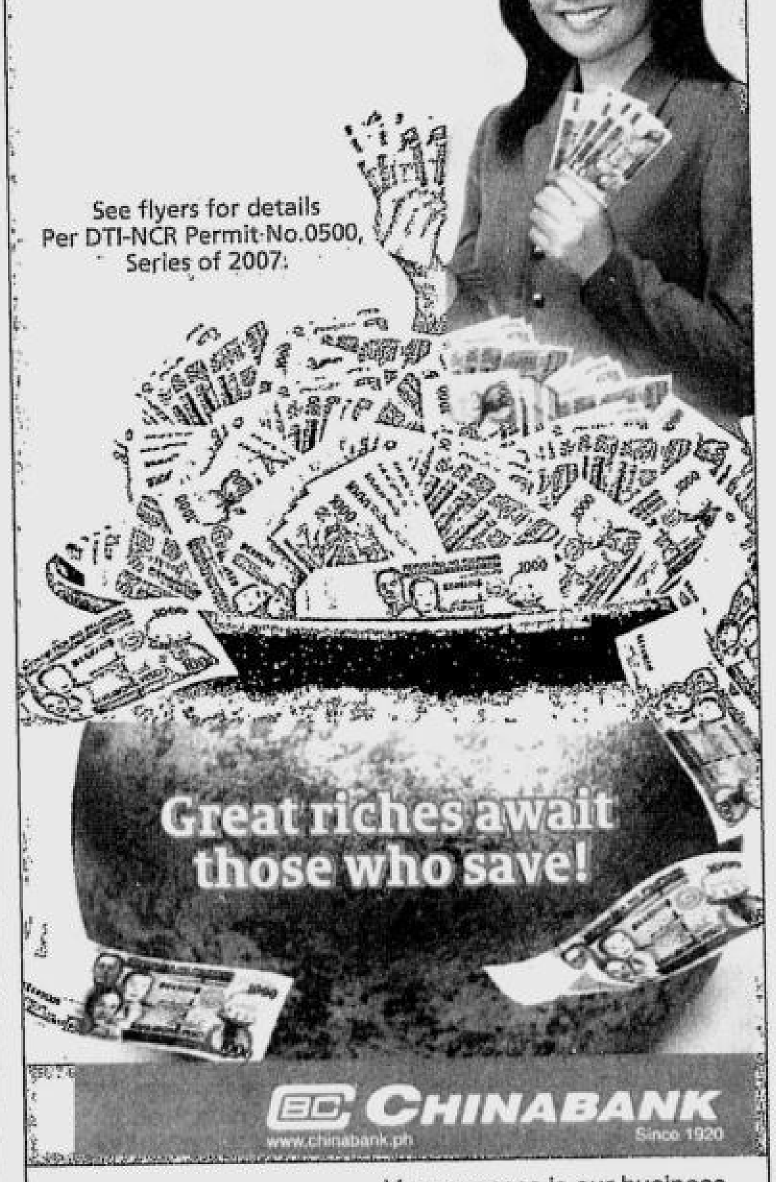
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PLDT group urges global NGN, VoIP partnerships

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE Telephone Co. group of companies, including subsidiaries Smart Communications Inc. and Mabuhay Satellite, called on fellow telcos and related industries worldwide to strengthen partnerships for the deployment of next generation networks (NGN) and voice over Internet protocol (VoIP).

The PLDT Group will address more than 300 delegates, representing over 110 telecommunications carriers and entities from Asia, Europe and the Pacific Rim, during the 3rd Asian Carriers Conference (ACC) in Cebu City from May 15 to 18. The ACC 2007 will be held at Shangri-La Mactan Island Resort and Spa.

PLDT Group Head for International and Carrier Business Victorico P. Vargas said in a statement that the country's largest telco had decided on the conference to give industry players a chance to iron out regional issues in the fast-paced telecommunications trade.

"What PLDT and Smart hope to achieve in this conference is to create a venue and environment for carriers and telecom players to strengthen existing relations, improve business, help resolve issues, as well as find new opportunities in a relaxed and hassle-free atmosphere," Vargas said.

Aside from the PLDT Group, the sponsors, speakers and exhibitors at the ACC include major telecom players such as France Telecom, Belgacom of Belgium, VSNL/Teleglobe of India and Canada, IDT of the United Kingdom, US Sprint, Verizon Business, Hong Kong Colo, NEC of Japan, Comptertel of Mexico and Telarix of the United States.

Other countries to be represented at the conference are Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, Bangladesh, Egypt, Oman, the UAE, South Africa, Hungary, Italy, Germany, Sweden and Russia.

"This year, we have expanded our guest list to include not only fixed and mobile carriers, but also roaming partners, VoIP and value-added service providers, submarine cable operators, vendors and suppliers," Vargas said.

The ACC started in 2005, attracting 150 delegates. Last year, attendance grew to over 180 participants. This year, registered delegates have reached over 300, and the number is expected to approach 350 by the time the conference commences on May 15.

"Support from the carrier and other telco players, like suppliers and cable operators has been strong and well above expectations," said Vargas. "We're proud to say that it is growing to become the largest telecommunications conference in the region."

With steady rise in equity, stock market seen to fare well in '07

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

TOTAL CAPITAL RAISED BY LISTED companies grew 20 percent to P28.65 billion for the first four months of the year from P23.87 billion for the corresponding period last year, according to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE).

Francis Lim, PSE president, said over the weekend that the steady rise in equity is a clear indication of the market's good prospects this year.

Year-to-date stock prices, as tracked by the PSEi, have so far gained 12.8 percent as of May 11. The surge came in the wake of a four-year climb, as shown by the 42.3-percent annual growth in 2006, the 15-percent rise in 2005, the 26.4-percent posted in 2004 and the 41.6-percent jump in 2003.

"I am confident we can sustain the PSEi's advance and the build-up in fresh and additional capital for the listed companies, provided the country succeeds in holding peaceful and credible elections next week," Lim said.

The PSE said that proceeds from two initial public offerings amounted to P2.57 billion from January to April this year—71.7 percent lower than the P9.09-billion level of the same period year. National Reinsurance Corp. of the Philippines just completed a P2.46-billion maiden offer, while Pacific Online Systems Corp. conducted its own P104.78-million IPO last April.

"But the slack in IPOs was more than made up by a dramatic increase in stock rights offerings," Lim said.

Equity raised from stock rights offerings from January to April this year had hit P14.43 billion—a whopping 44,500 times bigger than the P324,050 recorded in the same period last year.

Last January, Megaworld Corp. conducted a P10.79-billon stock rights offering This was followed by construction firm EEI, which raised around P540 million in March. Alliance Global Group Inc., the new holding company of real estate mogul Andrew Tan, completed its own P3.11-billion stock rights offering last month.

Proceeds from follow-on offerings, which also helped offset the drop in IPO equity, increased by 11.1 percent to P11.6 billion from P10.44 billion a year ago.

Filinvest Land Inc. held its follow-on offering in February, raising P5.92 billion. That same month, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. generated P5.67 billion.

"I am confident we can match, if not surpass, the amount of equity to be raised this year via the sale of primary shares through an IPO," Lim said. "That's because we already have in the pipeline several pending IPO applications worth P16 billion."

Plant expansions expected to prevent power shortfall

By Abigail L. Ho

EVEN IF NO NEW POWER PLANT IS put up in the coming years, the expansion of existing generation facilities may be enough to ensure adequate supply of power in the Luzon grid over the next three years.

Federico Lopez, president and chief operating officer of independent power producer First Gen Corp., said the best way to spur the expansion of existing plants was to fast-track the privatization of National Power Corp.'s assets.

He said private investors would surely want to boost the value of their acquired assets by improving their efficiency and even expanding their capacity.

Right now, Lopez said that even if there was an overcapacity in the Luzon grid, there could still be supply shortfalls, as some generation facilities were not running efficiently.

"If you increase the efficiency of a plant, it adds capacity to the grid and makes it more reliable," he explained. "The faster the government can privatize, the better for the grid."

Lopez added that while the construction of a new power plant—from the study and design stage to the actual commissioning—takes around five years, the expansion of an existing generation facility may be completed in two years.

"Plant expansions can provide sufficient additional supply to meet the requirements for the 2010 critical period," he said. "They're easier to undertake than greenfield projects and less costly."

Following the government's turnover of the 112-megawatt (MW) Pantabangan-Masiway hydropower plant package to First Gen subsidiary First Gen Hydro Power Corp., the company announced that it would be expanding the capacity of the facilities.

In an earlier interview, First Gen vice chair and chief executive Peter Garrucho said the first 15-MW upgrade of the plants' existing units should come on stream by mid-2008, while the next 16-MW upgrade should be done by mid-2009.

These should cost the company between $20 million and $25 million.

If things go well with the upgrade, he said the company would undertake an $80-million expansion project that would add another 65-MW unit to the Pantabangan plant, and another 13-MW unit to the Masiway facility.

The new units should come on stream by mid-2010.

SMC to anchor growth on new food products

SAN MIGUEL PURE FOODS CO. INC. (SMPFCI), the food division of San Miguel Corp. (SMC), is anchoring its growth on new branded food products that will emerge later this year.

According to SMPFCI, this move is in line with the food group's strategic shift from portfolio to branded food products. Sale of the products, which grew from 33 percent of total revenues in 2001 to 49 percent in 2006, continues to improve the company's gross margins.

"Leveraging on the success of new products will be key for us (in) going forward, and we're going to do all we can to keep the momentum going, and our new brands and categories fresh," SMC chair Eduardo M. Cojuangco Jr. told stockholders during the SMPFCI annual stockholders meeting last Friday.

However, Cojuangco did not identify the new products to be launched.

In 2006, branded food products, such as coffee, snack food, pancake mixes, ice cream, milk, cooking oil, and ready-to-eat meat products, posted an impressive P1.4 billion in revenue, almost double the 2005 results.

SMPFCI's strong first quarter performance indicates that the company is on the right track, with consolidated sales growing by 10 percent.

The consolidation of Monterey into SMPFCI in January, following the assignment by SMC of its remaining interest in that company, also helped boost SMPFCI's financial results.

Also, cost breaks in some major raw materials and improved efficiencies helped deliver higher margins in the first quarter, with a double-digit growth in income from operations.

The consolidation of Monterey is in line with SMC's move to simplify ownership of its extensive food division.

In 2006, prior to the consolidation, SMPFCI achieved a 5-percent increase in consolidated revenues to P53 billion—largely attributed to significant volume growth of its poultry feeds and dairy businesses.

Income from operations rose 23 percent from the previous year at P2.1 billion.

After deducting one-time costs related to restructuring and cost-reduction programs, operating profits in 2006 still exceeded that of the previous year by 10 percent. Net income after interest and income tax stood at P1 billion—almost at par with that of 2005. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

Traders ...

From page B1

Sentiment last week was also soured by Wall Street's 150-point drop Thursday night.

Meantime, Union Bank of the Philippines quietly resumed trading last Thursday after concluding its rights and follow-on offer the past two weeks. AB Capital said Unionbank was expected to do well given that Aboitiz Power Corp., the group's energy unit, is in the next IPO pipeline.

"As for the big-cap companies, most of their earnings have either been above or within expectations. This will help the market reach new highs after the elections as we see further re-ratings going forward," AB Capital Securities said. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

DC eyes ...

From page B3

worth up to P20 billion mainly for projects that would serve to pump-prime the economy, including those related to housing, food, health services and public works.

The agency recently opened a P1.2-billion facility for the National Housing Authority, which is tasked to address the relocation of informal settlers displaced along the route of the North Luzon Expressway extension project, which would connect the existing NLEX to Mindanao Avenue in Quezon City up to Circumferential Road No. 5.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 11, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	12.25	12.25	12	12	24,800
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	66	67	65	66.5	1,181,600
65.5	30.5	Banco de Oro Universal Bank	59.5	61	59.5	60.5	1,485,100
935	630	China Banking Corp.	900	910	900	910	2,100
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.5	400
119	60	Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	102	104	102	104	249,170
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank, Inc	0.52	0.54	0.52	0.53	1,570,000
68.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	61.5	61.5	61	61.5	2,565,100
55	30.5	Philippine National Bank	46	46.5	46	46	94,400
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	64	64	64	64	2,000
72	40	Philippine Bank of Communications	51	51	51	51	6,500
39.57	13.04	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	28.5	29.5	28	29	4,168,300
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	85	86	85	86	75,300
65.77	40.55	Union Bank of the Philippines	62	62.5	61.5	62	980,000
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
7.7	1.5	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	6.6	6.7	6.5	6.6	317,000
0.8	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	1,000,000
39	27	First Metro Investment Corp.	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	10,000
5	4.15	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.35	4.4	4.3	4.4	6,273,000
2.4	0.97	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.38	2.38	2.3	2.3	625,000
1,005.00	200	The Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc	590	590	585	585	3,220
2,250.00	1,895.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,130.00	2,130.00	2,130.00	2,130.00	200
1.94	1.02	Vantage Corp.	1.86	1.88	1.84	1.88	4,718,000
		ELECTRICITY/ENERGY/POWER & WATER					
0.37	0.16	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	300,000
62.5	41	First Gen Corp.	59	59	58.5	58.5	799,800
82.5	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	76.5	76.5	75.5	75.5	765,900
12.75	6.6	Manila Water Co. Inc.	12.25	12.25	11.75	12	3,524,900
81	13	Manila Electric Co. "A"	79	80	78.5	79.5	221,000
82	20.25	Manila Electric Co. "B"	79	80	79	80	1,060,300
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.7	13,967,000
5.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	6,877,000
2.2	1.6	Salcon Power Corp.	2.1	2.14	2.08	2.14	21,000
1.62	0.89	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.42	1.46	1.42	1.44	1,838,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5	2.65	Alaska Milk Corp.	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.9	173,000
2.96	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	35,000
3.4	1.24	CADP Group Corp.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	4,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26	26	26	26	8,000
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	53	53.5	53	53.5	203,400
1.62	0.69	RFM Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	46,000
4.05	2.34	Roxas Holdings	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42	3,040,000
70.5	61	San Miguel Corp. "A"	66.5	70.5	66.5	70.5	483,800
83	68	San Miguel Corp. "B"	78.5	81	78	81	289,700
0.51	0.19	Swift Foods Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	10,000
4.3	2	Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4	4	4	4	26,000
23.75	15.75	Universal Robina Corp.	16.25	16.25	16	16	4,742,200
		CONSTRUCTION/INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.17	1.07	EEI Corp.	4.75	4.95	4.75	4.95	4,268,000
9.2	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	212,000
7.5	2.04	Philippine National Const. Corp	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	13,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.84	1.78	1.84	2,254,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6.1	4,177,000
1.1	0.45	Interphil Laboratories Inc. "A"	0.9	0.95	0.9	0.95	220,000
1.2	0.9	Interphil Laboratories Inc. "B"	0.9	0.98	0.9	0.98	200,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIAL					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		HOLDING FIRMS					
4.05	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	17,000
0.0925	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.07	0.0725	0.07	0.0725	4,300,000
0.78	0.17	APC Group Inc.	0.64	0.78	0.64	0.76	199,050,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	20,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	684,400,000
0.019	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "B"	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	71,500,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	8.8	8.9	8.8	8.8	6,799,000
0.016	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	20,000,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.3	892,000
1.04	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	100,000
2.26	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.16	2.18	2.12	2.18	5,864,000
680	327.5	Ayala Corp.	595	600	590	600	219,620
14	7.92	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	13.75	14	13.75	13.75	168,700
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.55	4.6	4.55	4.6	92,000
4.45	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.7	3.85	8,785,000
8.8	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	8.1	8.8	8.1	8.8	5,184,000
1.3	0.7	F and J Prince Holdings Corp. "A"	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	15,000
6	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.2	600,000
0.42	0.13	Forum Pacific Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	90,000
3.55	1.14	House of Investments Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	10,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	12	12.25	12	12.25	1,347,100
0.43	0.185	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	80,000
12.5	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.5	11	11.5	382,800
4.4	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.35	5,562,000
5.4	1.16	PAL Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.6	3.6	116,000
0.48	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	1,640,000
1.7	1.2	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	6,000
407.5	205	SM Investments Corp.	375	380	375	377.5	268,500
2.2	0.6	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	6,000
0.51	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.38	0.41	0.37	0.4	120,380,000
0.41	0.05	Unioil Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	2,790,000
1.3	0.78	Vivant Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	7,000
0.24	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	30,000
0.55	0.15	Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.35	0.35	100,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Co. Inc.	1.42	1.5	1.42	1.46	3,031,000
18.75	10.25	Ayala Land Inc.	17.5	18.25	17.5	18	13,410,200
1.72	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.36	1.4	1.34	1.4	18,083,000
3.1	1.18	C and P Homes Inc.	2.5	2.65	2.5	2.6	1,750,000
4.5	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4	37,000
2.9	1	Cityland Development Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	15,000
0.54	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	400,000
0.54	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.5	0.5	8,710,000
0.31	0.14	EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.205	0.215	0.205	0.21	280,000
3.1	0.64	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.75	2.75	1,171,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.77	0.78	11,780,000
0.175	0.027	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.15	0.175	0.145	0.17	74,000,000
1.12	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	1,120,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.72	1.74	1.7	1.72	46,282,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. "A"	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	15,000,000
1.8	0.72	Keppel Philippines Properties Inc.	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.8	105,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.42	0.43	0.41	0.42	14,880,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.72	0.73	0.72	0.72	1,560,000
0.034	0.011	Marsteel Consolidated Inc. "A"	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	7,800,000
0.036	0.012	Marsteel Consolidated Inc. "B"	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	500,000
3.95	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.65	58,488,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.45	4.5	122,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	190,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	18.25	18.25	18	18	1,064,500
6	1.48	SM Development Corp.	5	5.1	4.95	5.1	5,045,000
13	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12	12.25	11.75	12	21,417,000
0.96	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.69	0.72	0.69	0.71	1,680,000
0.27	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc	0.19	0.205	0.19	0.2	5,520,000
1.71	0.3	[illegible] Realty Holdings Inc.	1.34	1.48	1.32	1.44	[illegible]
		MEDIA					
31.5	13.5	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	31.5	31.5	30.5	31.5	317,100
1.2	0.97	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	13,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.66	1.68	1.66	1.66	2,800,000
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,365.00	1,365.00	1,345.00	1,350.00	54,620
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,555.00	2,555.00	2,540.00	2,550.00	114,550
7.9	3.1	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.7	1,713,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	8,310,000
9	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	8.2	8.3	7.8	7.8	865,000
7.6	2	IPVG Corp.	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.9	1,067,000
0.075	0.046	ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	2,400,000
0.033	0.011	Imperial Resources Inc. "A"	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	5,000,000
0.0675	0.038	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.06	3,100,000
0.06	0.025	PhilWeb Com Inc	0.049	0.049	0.046	0.049	106,000,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.16	2.26	2.08	2.1	1,963,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.88	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	500,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.5	184,000
32	12.5	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	27	28.5	26.5	28.5	3,056,800
2.14	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.92	2	1.92	2	[illegible]
		HOTELS & LEISURE					
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	4.05	4.1	4.05	4.1	2,333,000
0.52	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.42	0.52	0.42	0.49	47,870,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.96	0.99	0.96	0.98	[illegible]
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
4.35	1.84	Macroasia Corp.	3.9	3.95	3.9	3.95	1,136,000
16	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp	14	15.25	14	15	3,666,900
30	9.5	Paxys Inc.	27	27.5	27	27.5	[illegible]
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	393,900,000
7.6	2.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	6.4	6.6	6.4	6.6	2,053,000
7.7	2.55	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	6.6	6.8	6.6	6.8	619,000
20.5	5.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	19.5	20	19.5	20	5,116,200
14.75	8.7	Benguet Corp. "A"	12.5	13	12.5	13	92,200
4	1.02	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	22,000
2.12	0.0602	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.04	2.12	2.02	2.12	37,946,000
0.42	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	3,110,000
0.47	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	1,510,000
0.037	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.036	230,300,000
0.039	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.037	0.038	0.037	0.038	270,700,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.02	315,500,000
5.9	2.65	Philex Mining Corp.	5.2	5.4	5.1	5.3	13,575,000
32	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28.5	27.5	28.5	1,503,700
0.87	0.25	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.78	0.8	0.78	0.79	1,230,000
1.8	0.41	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.46	1.52	1.34	1.44	25,414,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.23	Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.37	18,020,000
0.017	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "A"	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.017	484,200,000
0.019	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "B"	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	5,000,000
14.81	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.25	10.25	10	10	32,900
0.0182	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.017	275,300,000

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK

CURRENCIES

May 11, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.741455	1.000000	47.1920
Japan	Yen	0.006182	0.008337	0.3934
United Kingdom	Pound	1.467784	1.979600	93.4213
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.094811	0.127872	6.0345
Switzerland	Franc	0.607850	0.819807	38.6883
Canada	Dollar	0.667436	0.900171	42.4809
Singapore	Dollar	0.488345	0.658631	31.0821
Australia	Dollar	0.616646	0.831670	39.2482
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.966828	2.652661	125.1844
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.197710	0.266652	12.5838
Brunei	Dollar	0.486743	0.656470	30.9801
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000114	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.022884	0.030864	1.4565
UAE	Dirham	0.201927	0.272339	12.8522
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.348700	63.6479
Korea	Won	0.000802	0.001082	0.0511
China	Yuan**	0.096373	0.129978	6.1339
Argentina	Peso	0.240928	0.324939	15.3345
Brazil	Real	0.367712	0.495933	23.4041
Denmark	Kroner	0.134163	0.180946	8.5392
India	Rupee	0.018066	0.024366	1.1499
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218075	0.294118	13.8800
Mexico	New Peso	0.068401	0.092253	4.3536
New Zealand	Dollar	0.542753	0.732011	34.5451
Norway	Kroner	0.122368	0.165038	7.7885
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012250	0.016521	0.7797
South Africa	Rand	0.106592	0.143761	6.7844
Sweden	Kroner	0.108294	0.146056	6.8927
Syria	Pound	0.014283	0.019264	0.9091
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.022258	0.030020	1.4167
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000346	0.000466	0.0220

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—May 10, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.

** Asian time closing rate as of May 10, 2007

Another condotel to rise in Cebu

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PACIFIC CONCORD PROPERTIES Inc., a developer of residential condominium hotels, is considering a "Trump- or Ritz Carlton-quality" project near Cebu's international convention center.

Beth Collingz, managing director of PLC International Marketing Networks, which is a partner of PCPI, said the planned high-end project dubbed Lancaster Mactan Resort Condotels would be executed in partnership with several investment trusts in the United Kingdom and investors in Cebu.

"Overseas investments [are] coming in and [this] is not something that we've typically seen in the past," she said.

Collingz said investors were looking for a five-star hotel resort, which can be used for vacations and then rented out when not in use.

PCPI is already doing similar projects that cater to the high end luxury lifestyle market.

PCPI is putting up the 32-story Lancaster Suites Manila and the 40-story Lancanster Suites Atrium, near the west-side corner of Shaw Boulevard and Edsa in Mandaluyong City; as well as the Lancanster Suites Cebu near the Mactan International Airport.

According to PCPI, the Manila project was already sold out and would be delivered "soon" while the Atrium project was 55-percent booked and would be finished in late 2010.

As for the planned project near the Cebu International Convention Center, units would be sold by invitation only and would in the $150,000 to $200,000 range for deluxe 500 square-feet (about 46 square meters) studios.

"A lot of this interest is being driven by the relatively cheap market prices here compared to Europe and the easy payment options available for condominium hotel developments" Collingz said.

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PELAC Global Bond Fund	1.1981	1.1920
PELAC Peso Fixed Income Fund	1.0018	0.9947
PELAC Peso Equity Fund	1.2550	1.2368

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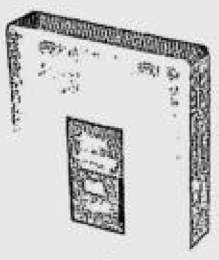

SPA9000 IP Telephony System

The SPA9000 opens up access to Voice over IP, including low-cost long distance service and telephone number portability. It is easy to set up in a matter of minutes. New telephones are also automatically detected and it boasts an integrated web server for features to be configured using a browser.

In fact, the SPA9000 is the ideal host for Linksys business telephones. It supports a greater set of advanced features with them such as shared line appearances, hunt groups, call transfer and others!

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- High-end features match those of large business voice servers
- Upgradeable to 16 SIP compatible IP phones
- Powerful self-configuration capabilities

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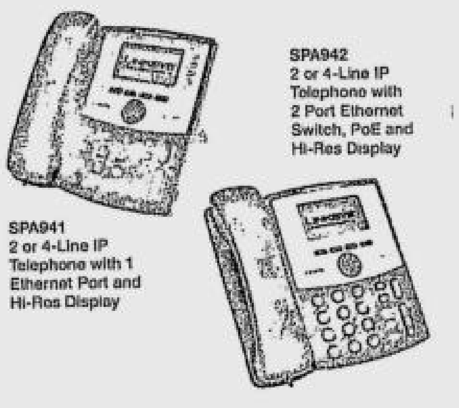

SPA942
2 or 4-Line IP Telephone with 2 Port Ethernet Switch, PoE and Hi-Res Display

SPA941
2 or 4-Line IP Telephone with 1 Ethernet Port and Hi-Res Display

When it comes to business or home office telephony, the SPA941 and SPA942 are in a league of their own. Both models offer great interoperability with equipment from Voice over IP infrastructure leaders and features such as easy station moves, presence and shared line appearances.

The SPA942 comes with dual switched Ethernet ports and 802.3af PoE support. Both models are easily upgradable to four lines and each line can be configured to use a unique phone number. What's more, they are easy to install!

Great Features:

- Two active lines
- High-resolution graphical display
- Connect directly to an Internet telephone service provider

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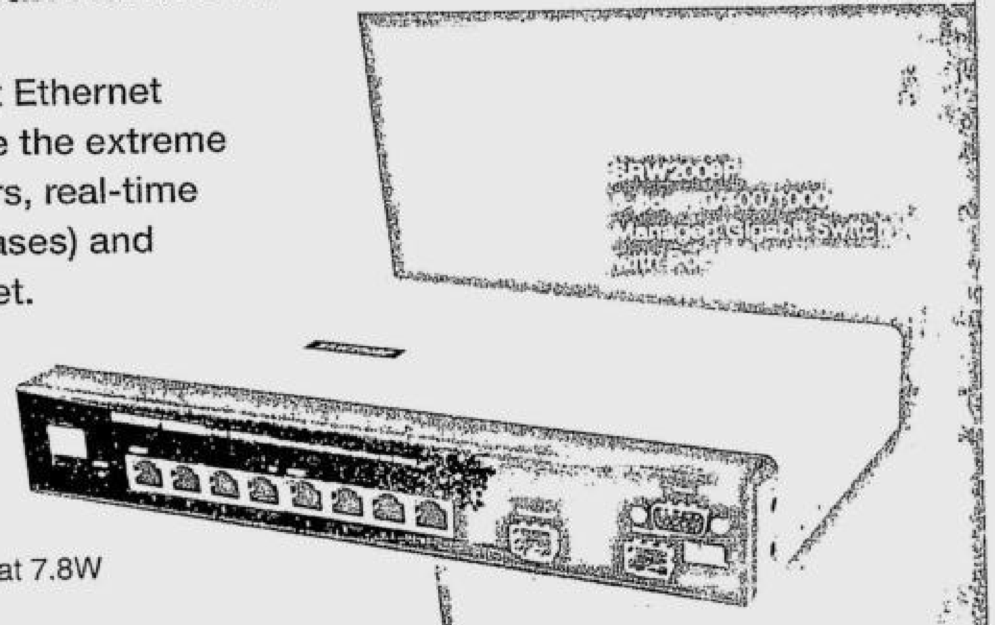

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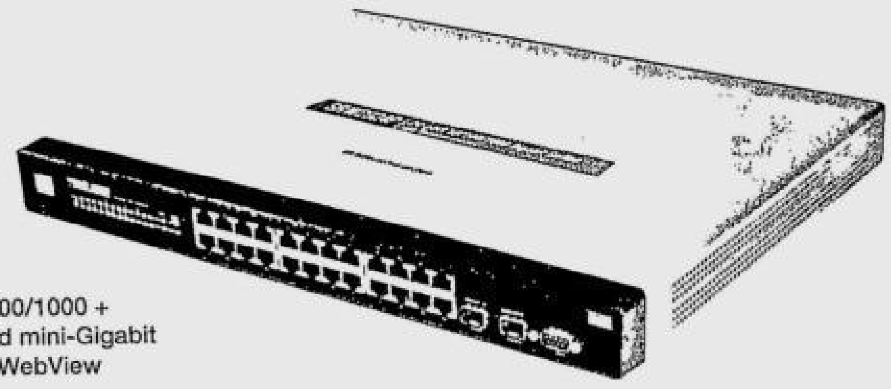
  - supporting 4 ports at 15.4W per port or 8 ports at 7.8W
- Features a 16 Gbps, non-blocking switch core
- Fully manageable through the WebView web interface or console port



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24-port 10/100/1000 +
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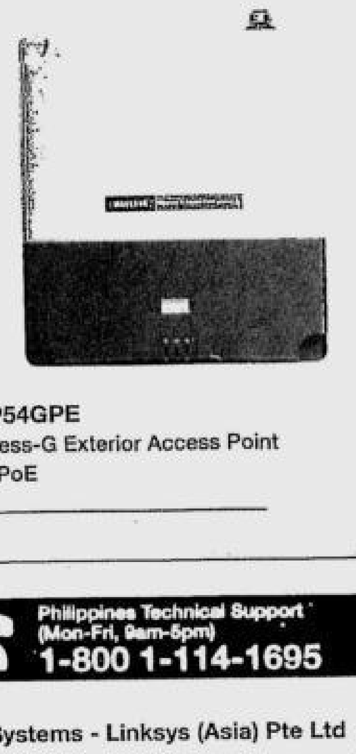

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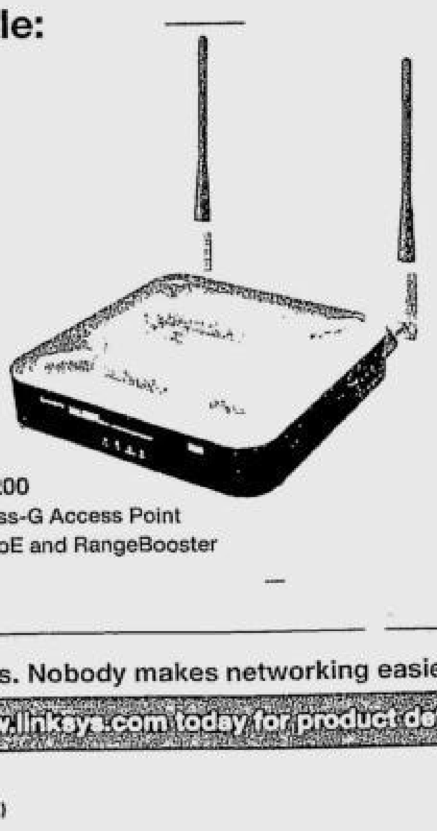

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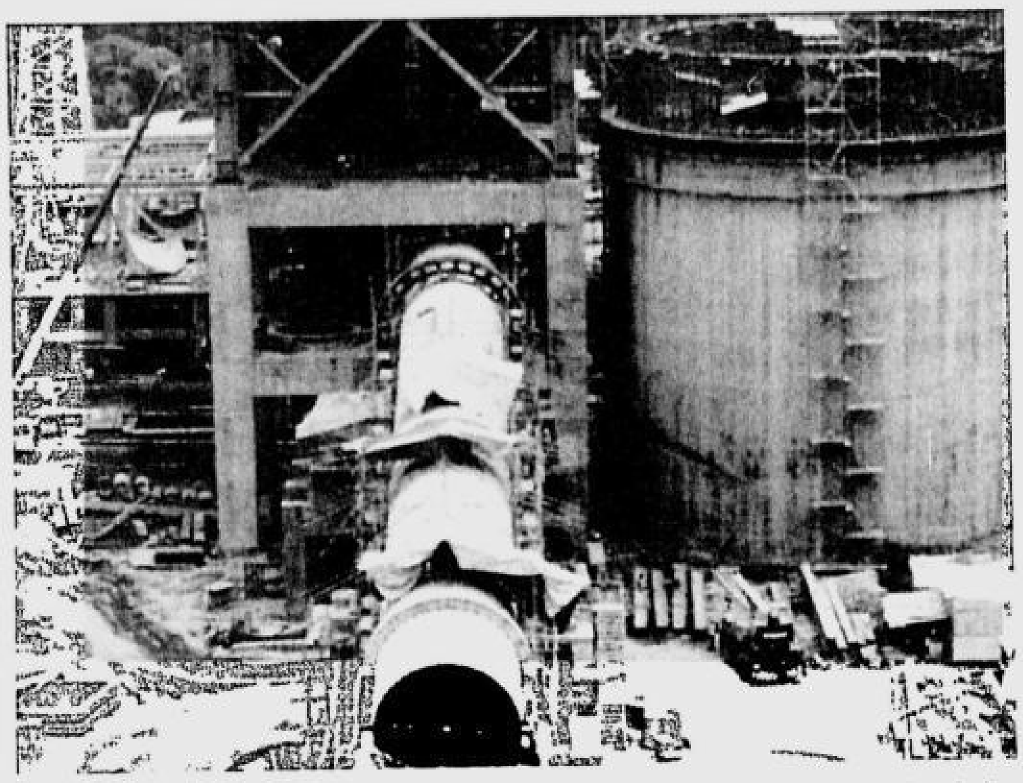
Local cement supply seen to remain adequate



MOST existing cement plants are operating below their designed capacities. With the whole industry's unused capacity, cement makers are confident they can adequately meet demand in the next six years.

Despite continued construction boom

By Ronnel W. Domingo

DOMESTIC SUPPLY OF CEMENT will remain adequate "at least in the next six years" despite the projected construction boom driven by overseas Filipino remittances and renewed business confidence, according to the Cement Manufacturers Association of the Philipines.

Cemap executive director Ernesto M. Ordoñez said in a statement that the supply situation would help sustain economic momentum and enable the government to meet its infrastructure program targets.

"As it is, the cement industry is still grappling with problems of overcapacity," Ordoñez said. "For the past five years, cement demand has been stagnant and capacity utilization has averaged at only 60 percent."

With this unused capacity, he said local cement manufactures could adequately meet the demand for the next six years.

As for prices, Ordoñez cited data from the National Statistics Office which showed that the domestic prices had gone up by only 6.3 percent a year from 2000 to 2006, and not 75 percent as reported in a draft World Bank report.

He said Cemap officials met last April 30 with WB officials, whose country chief Joachim von Amsberg "admitted that the report was not yet final and was being revised."

"Official figures from the NSO show the rate for other construction materials has increased much faster, with yearly prices of asphalt growing by 11.1 percent, clear glass by 12.8 percent, reinforcing steel by 17.3 percent, and structural steel by 10.6 percent," the Cemap president said.

Ordoñez said the cement industry was just starting to recover after piling up more than P9 billion in losses from 2002 to 2003.

"This was the period when the dumping of imported cement into the country triggered abnormally low prices," he said.

He added that due to soft demand and stiff industry competition, cement makers were still hard pressed to recover their input costs.

"Cement prices have risen by only 3.7 percent yearly since the 1997 Asian financial crisis," he said. "This is way below the annual average inflation of 5.8 percent and the average rise in electricity costs of 9.4 percent during the period.

According to Cemap, one of the major determinants of cement prices in the Philippines was power cost, which accounts for approximately a quarter of the total cost.

The Philippines has the highest electricity cost in the region at nearly double the $0.06 per kiloWatt-hour in other Southeast Asian countries.

To bring down cement prices, Cemap said efforts should continue to reduce the cost of power and control overpricing at the retail level.

Cemap members include Alsons Cement, APO Cement, Continental Operating, Fortune Cement, FR Cement, Taiheiyo Cement, Iligan Cement, Lloyds Richfiel Industrial, Mindanao Portland Cement, Northern Cement, Pacific Cement, Republic Cement, Solid Cement and Union Cement.

ATS, Singapore firm sign joint venture deal

ABOITIZ TRANSPORT SYSTEM (ATS) IS ENtering into a joint venture arrangement with MCC Transport Singapore Pte Ltd. and Mercantile Ocean Maritime Co. (Filipinas) Inc.

The joint venture deal, signed recently, paved the way for the creation of a company that would be engaged in the container transportation business.

The joint venture will be named MCC Transport Philippines Inc.

ATS expects that the joint venture will contribute positively to its freight containerization business.

Its partners are regional short sea operators and are fully owned by Maersk Singapore. They are members of the A.P. Moller-Maersk group of companies, renowned for its global shipping and logistics operations.

ATS will bring into the joint venture its experience as a pioneer in containerization in the Philippines.

MCC Philippines will operate its first 600-ton equivalent units container ship in June this year to service the ports of Manila, Cebu and Cagayan. This container vessel will offer regular weekly sailings at very competitive rates.

In addition, MCC Philippines will provide good quality equipment and containers, and sophisticated operating systems that can provide immediate information to customers.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

GMA 7 posts 22% increase in Q1 net income

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

TELEVISION GIANT GMA NETwork Inc. said its net income surged 22 percent to P421 million in the first quarter of the year from year-ago level.

Gross revenue in the first quarter rose by 9 percent to almost P2.5 billion, the company said in a statement citing its unaudited financial report.

Airtime revenues of both GMA 7 and free channel QTV 11 posted improvements. QTV's first quarter gross revenue was 48 percent higher than that in the first quarter of 2006, while revenue from the network's international operations—GMA Pinoy TV and syndication—grew 89 percent from year-ago level.

Operating expenses rose 6 percent in the first quarter to P1.155 billion year-on-year, due largely to GMA 7's higher costs of production , advertising and promotions for new programs that were launched during the period.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (Ebitda) grew to P902 million or 18 percent higher than last year's P764 million due to significantly higher net revenue.

GMA Network has maintained its lead in Mega Manila TV ratings as of March 2007. Based on AGB Nielsen's Mega Manila TV Households Overall Channel Ratings, the network posted an average total day rating of 17.3 percent against rival ABS-CBN's 14.9 percent.

Seven of the top 10 TV programs for March were from GMA. Also, eight of the top 10 daytime programs and seven of the top 10 evening or prime time programs were also from GMA, the company said.

The network's international channel, GMA Pinoy TV, continues to register significant increase in number of subscription worldwide. As of February 2007, GMA Pinoy TV's official subscriber count reached more than 131,000.

GMA Network hopes to raise between P6.4 billion and P7.8 billion from a planned public offering of new shares and Philippine Deposit Receipts (PDRs) in July.

The company is planning to offer 91.346 million common shares at between P7 and P8.50 per share.

PDRs are shares that are entitled to economic benefits such as cash, stock or property dividends. However, they have no voting power.

Bicol reconnected to Luzon grid; power supply assured

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER SUFFERING ALMOST TWO WEEKS of rotating brownouts, the Bicol Region has finally been reconnected to the Luzon grid, ensuring adequate and reliable power supply on Election Day and the days after.

National Transmission Corp. president and chief executive Arthur Aguilar said the state firm energized the Naga-Tayabas bypass link at 7 p.m. last Friday, effectively stabilizing the region's power supply and ending daily power rationing in Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay and Sorsogon.

"We had 200 people stretched out over 2.5 km of thick vegetation in the mountains working round-the-clock to complete the bypass scheme as soon as possible," he said.

The Bicol Region was cut off from the Luzon grid when the Naga-Tayabas 500-kilovolt line tripped, following the collapse of six steel towers in the area.

According to Transco, the fallen towers were weakened by super typhoons Milenyo and Reming last year.

To remedy the situation, Transco implemented a bypass scheme, which involved the construction of steel poles and emergency restoration system structures, as well as the utilization of a portion of the adjacent Gumaca-Labo line to bring more power to the region.

Due to transmission constraints, the Bicol Region was disconnected from the Luzon grid, with the Tiwi geothermal power plant and the Bacon-Manito geothermal facility serving as the region's only power sources.

The two plants are supplying only 100 megawatts (MW) of power to the region, however, not enough to meet the average daily peak demand of 140 MW. Demand sometimes even spikes to between 150 MW and 155 MW during the summer months.

The Tiwi and BacMan plants are now able to meet this demand with the delivery of two generation sets from National Power Corp.

With the Bicol Region's reconnection to the Luzon grid, power supply in the area is expected to be even more stable.

In the meantime, to prevent a repeat of what had happened in the Bicol Region, Transco has created a task force to inspect other transmission towers that may have been similarly weakened due to last year's super typhoons.

CEB offers ₱999 fare to regional destinations

CEBU PACIFIC IS OFFERING P999 ONE-WAY fares to Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and Taipei.

The seat sale will run from May 12, 2007 to May 18, 2007, or until the allotted seats are sold out. Travel will be from June 18 to Oct. 15, 2007. The P999 fare is nonrefundable and is exclusive of applicable taxes and surcharges.

Candice Iyog, CEB VP for marketing and product, said the new offering would surely sell out quickly given CEB's experience with previous seat sales.

Iyog said the best way to grab the promo was via CEB's website, (cebupacificair.com) where immediate payment through credit card is required upon booking

CEB's fleet of 14 Airbus aircraft is the youngest in the Philippines, serving 20 domestic and eight regional destinations with the addition of Taipei beginning June 13, 2007.

HP bullish on Asia

By Riza T. Olchondra

HEWLETT PACKARD CO. (HP) DROVE home last week what has been buzzing in the technology marketplace for some time: That the center of the IT universe is no longer in the West.

At HP's annual Mobility Summit held recently in Shanghai, China—the first time this was held in Asia—HP placed its bet on Asia with the global launch of 13 business and consumer laptops.

Todd Bradley, executive vice president of HP's personal systems group, introduced the devices which are all based on Intel's new chipset called Santa Rosa.

"Laptop sales were up 40 percent last year and the ultimate sign of success is customers voting with their wallets," he said.

The star of the launch was the HP Pavilion HDX Entertainment Notebook PC, codenamed "Dragon." It is a 20-in laptop that looks like a giant clamshell phone with high-definition screen display, four speakers and a remote control built into the casing.

The company is aiming it at the Asian market and at those who want a PC and a TV in one without losing computing power.

Also launched were the HP Pavilion HDX Entertainment Notebook PC for consumers and the Compaq 2710 ultraportable laptop-tablet aimed at the business traveler.

The Compaq 2710 is the first HP laptop to feature a light on the lid so that it can be used in dark conditions. It also has a web cam that can scan a business card, with an integrated software automatically stores the scanned information as text. No more manual encoding of contact numbers from business cards!

There are built-in SD card slots across the range of new laptops and a Durakeys coating that extends the life of the keyboards by 50 percent. HP has exclusive use of the third-party technology for one year.

Optional are the Blu-ray drives and a detachable battery tray that HP claims can extend the battery life of one model to over 15 hours.

Patent ruling lauded

CAUSE-ORIENTED GROUPS hailed a ruling by the United States Court of Appeals (Usca) invalidating the patent of international pharmaceutical firm Pfizer on the drug amlodipine besylate, saying the ruling significantly boosts the crusade in the country for more affordable medicines.

Ayos na Gamot sa Abot Kayang Presyo (Agap) coalition and the Cut-the-Cost Cut-the-Pain Network (3CPNet) said the US court ruling "offers renewed hope to millions of Filipinos suffering from hypertension but who cannot afford the cost of the Pfizer treatment."

The groups led the local crusade against Pfizer products, saying that they cost much higher than their price tags in other Asian countries.

They also hit Pfizer's alleged efforts to block the government bid to provide the local hypertensive sector with affordable treatment through legislative remedies.

Amlodipine besylate is distributed in the country under the brand Norvasc. The drug company came under fire following disclosures that it is sold at less than half the Philippine price in other Asian countries including India, and after Pfizer blocked a government bid for parallel importation.

Pfizer sued Philippine International Trading Corp. to prevent the importation of Norvasc and other similarly priced products from India and their subsequent distribution in PITC outlets in the country at lower prices. Pfizer alleged that the government's move violated its claimed patent on the amlodipine besylate Norvasc which the US Court invalidated.

Makers of peanut butter, handcrafted products win Citi awards

By Michelle V. Remo

A MAKER OF HANDCRAFTED products in the province of Aurora and a small-scale peanut butter producer in Laguna bagged the 2007 Citi Microentrepreneur of the Year Awards.

"I never dreamed I would go this far. I came from a poor family and because of our dire need, I discovered how to make peanut butter that suits the Filipino taste," said Jennilyn Antonio, who won the 2007 MOTY for the "Maunlad" category.

Antonio used to be a factory worker while her husband was a company driver, and their income was never enough to provide sufficiently for their four children.

She said she had to sell snacks to her co-factory workers on the side to augment their family income.

Their lives started getting better when Jennilyn started making peanut butter.

'Maunlad,' 'Masikap'

"It all started when one day, I was in a market and my eyes just happened to focus on a stall selling *kare kare* . I thought of peanut butter which is used in the preparation of *kare kare* and right then and there, I decided I will make peanut butter," Antonio said in a speech delivered during the recent awarding ceremony held at the Century Park Hotel.

Starting with a very small capital obtained through microfinancing, Antonio started her small business. Today, she supplies peanut butter to 51 branches of two popular bakeshop chains.

The Maunlad award won by Antonio recognizes microentrepreneurs who have grown their businesses to levels that now generate employment for people apart from family members.

The "Masikap" award, which is given to someone who has started a microbusiness that has become a reliable source of income for a family, was won this year by Consuelo Valenzuela, maker of handcrafted products in Baler, Aurora.

Winners of the Citi Microentrepreneur awards are chosen based on various criteria, which include a 100-percent repayment rate (of any microfinance loan obtained), employment generation, sales turnover, rate of reinvestment and savings.

The assets of any nominees for the Maunlad award should not exceed P1 million, while assets of nominees for the Masikap award should not exceed P300,000.

Selection committee

The national selection committee for this year's MOTY is composed of the following: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Gov. Amando Tetangco Jr., Citi's country officer Sanjiv Vohra, former Monetary Board member Antonino Alindogan Jr., Ayala Corp. president Fernando Zobel de Ayala, Tessie Sy-Coson of SM Investments Corp., Cebu Pacific president Lance Gokongwei, RFM Corp. president Jose Ma. A. Concepcion III, Stacey Morse, Economics professor Emmanuel Esguerra, AIM president Francis Estrada and Philippine Daily Inquirer chair Marixi Rufino-Prieto.

The Microentrepreneur of the Year Awards is funded by the Citi Foundation and is implemented locally in partnership with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Microfinance Council of the Philippines Inc.

Boost to microenterprises

Citi Foundation said this was one way to help boost microenterprises in the country and encourage people to put up their own businesses.

"One of the most effective means of ensuring that the poor will take part in their economy is to provide them with access to financial knowledge, products and services that they need to help them build wealth and achieve their goals," Citi said in a statement.

The BSP's participation in the MOTY is consistent with its agenda of boosting microfinance industry in the country.

The BSP said there are more than 650,000 clients being serviced by 210 banks engaged in microfinancing, which have provided nearly P4.2 billion worth of loans to small businesses.

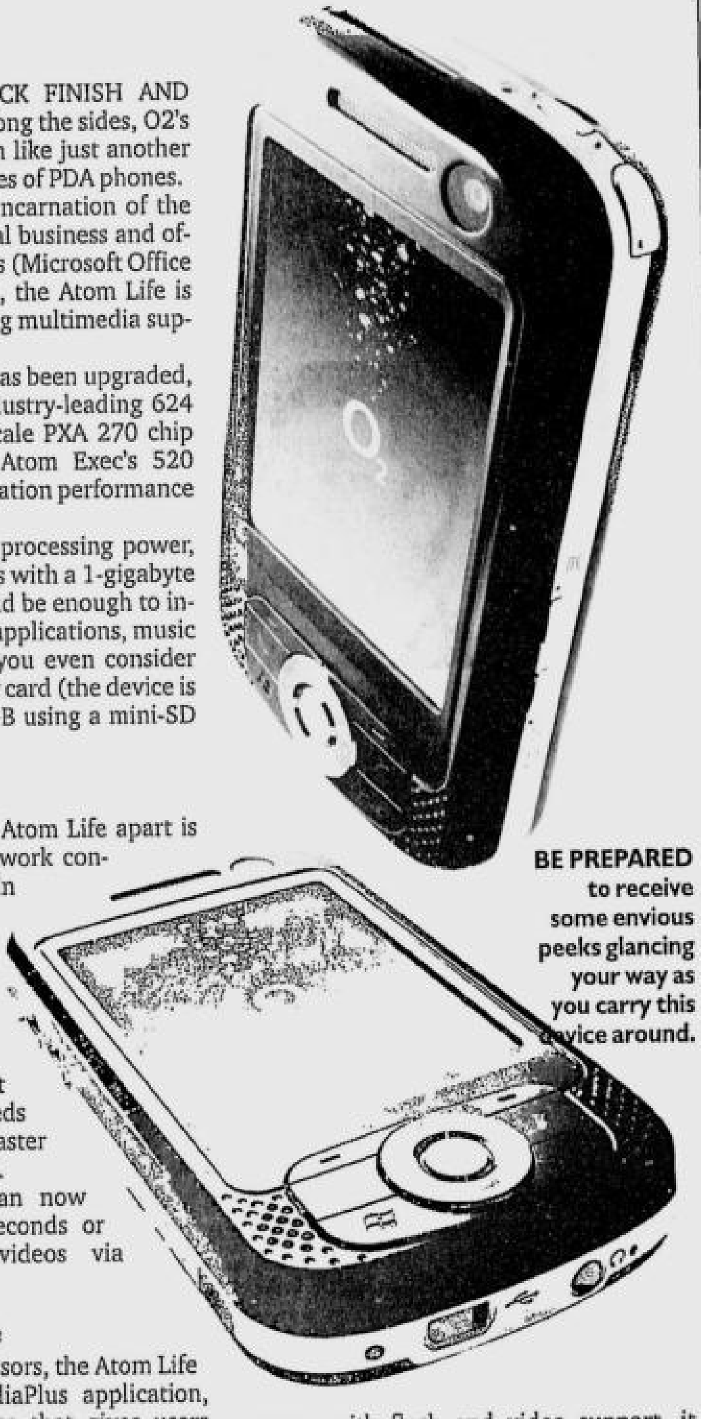
Antonio has encouraged other people wanting to improve their financial condition to start their own business and tap the services of institutions that could provide them the help they needed.

"Poverty is not a barrier to achieving success," she said.

Mobile phone evolution continues

This black beauty is fully loaded

By Charles E. Buban



BE PREPARED to receive some envious peeks glancing your way as you carry this device around.

WITH ITS SHINY BLACK FINISH AND chrome-like trimming along the sides, O2's Xda Atom Life may seem like just another upgrade in the Atom series of PDA phones.

But while this latest incarnation of the Atom still packs the usual business and office oriented applications (Microsoft Office applications, video call), the Atom Life is now provided with strong multimedia support.

The Atom Life's CPU has been upgraded, now powered by an industry-leading 624 MHz using an Intel XScale PXA 270 chip (this should beat the Atom Exec's 520 MHz-processor in application performance and load time).

Besides this jump in processing power, the Atom Life also comes with a 1-gigabyte flash memory that should be enough to install and store a host of applications, music and video files before you even consider buying another memory card (the device is expandable to up to 3GB using a mini-SD card).

3.5G support

What really sets the Atom Life apart is the addition of 3G network connectivity with built-in support for high-speed downlink packet access, also known as 3.5G.

The 3.5G is the next generation of mobile broadband that delivers download speeds four to five times faster than current 3G speeds.

This means one can now download songs in seconds or watch high-quality videos via streaming.

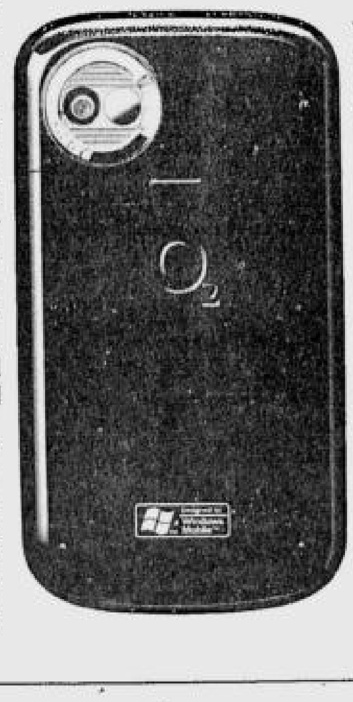
Common interface

Just like its predecessors, the Atom Life also comes with MediaPlus application, O2's common interface that gives users easy access to photo, video and musical collections, as well as FM radio.

The Atom Life also features Windows Media Player 10 Mobile (with Equalizer controls) that supports a wide range of file formats (MP3, WMA, WAV, AMR-NB and MIDI files).

To make the listening experience from its dual speaker more satisfying, the Atom Life now comes with software support for SRS's WOW virtual surround technology, improving its overall audio playback clarity.

While the Atom Life still retains the two megapixel camera with flash and video support, it now comes with a second 0.3-MP camera that makes video calling possible.



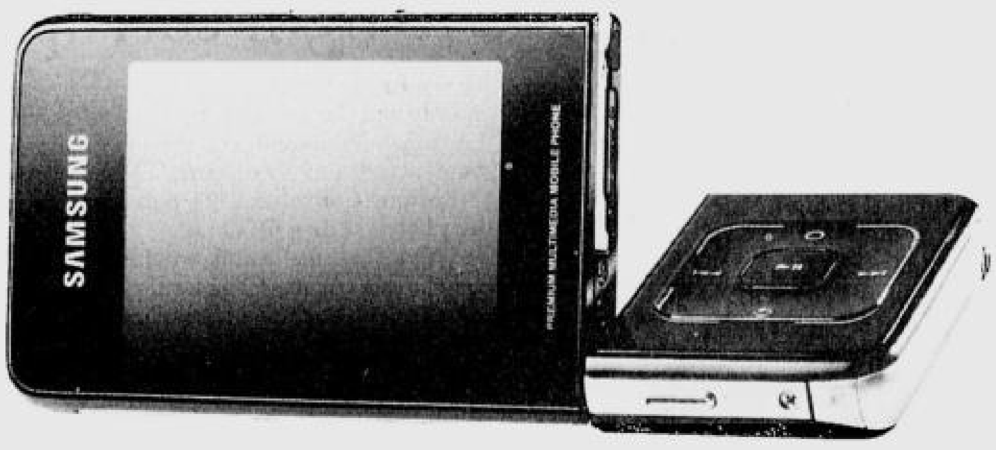
THE 2.0MP camera located at the back is equipped with a white LED strobe flash and self portrait preview mirror.

Near perfect

Indeed, this P45,000 device is a near-perfect PDA phone that promises to elicit envious peeks from your friends and passers-by.

"Near perfect" because with a touchscreen interface and small icons, you will have to get used to popping out the stylus every time you make a call, perform onscreen selections, or access the onscreen QWERTY keyboard.

Given the wide range of battery-sapping applications it packs, this device registers a talk time of just about four hours, so keep that charger ready or an extra fully charged battery close at hand.



F500, the ultimate personal multimedia device

Samsung goes slender, rolls out new models

By Corrie Salientes-Narisma

SLEEK, SLENDER AND CHIC.

These can describe the latest additions to the Samsung Ultra mobile phone line—the Samsung Ultra Special—which were individually designed to suit the needs of specific target market segments.

Called the Samsung Ultra Messaging, the i600 suits the no-frills, busy executives who need a powerful device to run their businesses while on the go.

The Samsung F300 is called the Ultra Music to stress its prowess in the music department, perfect for the music lovers who are highly mobile, while the Samsung Ultra Video or F500, which combines a phone and a personal media player, was designed to appeal to trend setters of all ages who go for multimedia content.

Samsung Ultra Messaging, ultra thin at 11.8 mm, is a smart device that blends the feature-rich desktop functionality of the Windows Mobile 5.0 platform with multimedia capabilities--such as the High-Speed Downlink Packet Access (HSDPA) and WiFi, providing the best connectivity for Internet and e-mail.

It is also the first smartphone to support web applications such as podcasting. This 3.5G phone has a Qwerty keyboard with wheel key, which is perfect for composing messages or e-mail.

Samsung Mobile Philippines vice-president Charles Choi says i600 is not only a smart device, it is fashionable, too.

"Samsung seeks more than quality technology. Our goal is to go beyond and satisfy both the mind and the aesthetic," he says.

Samsung Ultra Messaging sells for about P24,995 a unit.

The Samsung Ultra Music, also known the Beyonce phone (the famous singer and Hollywood actress is F300's model), is everything in a small package, says Samsung.

It is a complete music player equipped with a digital power amplifier that makes it easy to navigate through the song list. It has a stereo FM radio and a Quick PC Sync that allows users to create a music library.

What is unique about this phone is its double-face design. On one side is a large, clear screen with a sweep touch key that makes music control simple, the other side is a fully functional phone that can be used while listing to music.

The 9.4-mm phone features a 2.0 mega -pixel camera, long-lasting battery life and microSD slot for memory expansion.

F300 will be sold for about P19,995.

From the F300 family comes the Samsung Ultra Video or F500, which Samsung says is the ultimate personal multimedia device.

Like the Ultra Music, it has a dual-face design. One side features a compact mobile phone with a 1.46" 65K TFT display while the other side is a personal media player with 2.4" 262-K QVGA (quarter video graphics array) thin film transistors or TFT display.

F500 is the first phone to play the DivX files, which allows users to view a large array of video content. Its screen swivels away from the controls to adjust the viewing angle or form a stand. It has an internal memory of 400 MBs, expandable up to 2 GBs using the microSD card.

With this memory, a user can view two two-hour movies. It is also equipped with the necessities of an ultra special lifestyle—a music player, camera, video recorder and FM radio.

The Samsung Ultra Video will be sold for P30,000.

The Samsung Ultra Messaging and Ultra Music were launched last week, while the Ultra Video will soon be introduced to the local market.

F300, the Beyoncé phone

i600 for the businessman on the go

Taiwanese phone maker prepares to take on the world

By Abigail L. Ho

AS THE SMARTPHONE MARKET CONtinues to heat up, Taiwanese firm High Tech Computer Corp. (HTC) is preparing to battle it out with established device manufacturers here in the Philippines and the rest of the world.

The company recently signed an agreement to acquire Dopod International, a PDA phone and smartphone distributor in Asia, for $14.5 million.

Under the agreement, HTC will purchase the assets of Dopod subsidiaries in Australia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

In effect, all Dopod products that will be rolled out in the future will carry the "HTC" brand name. All existing Dopod products, on the other hand, will retain the Dopod brand name until the end of the product cycle, according to HTC chief marketing communication specialist Maggie Cheng.

A SMART handheld device from Dopod

She said the acquisition of Dopod would "reinforce HTC's position as the world's leading provider of smart handheld devices."

Apart from having its own branded products, HTC also manufactures PDA phones and smartphones for carriers all over the world.

Here in the Philippines, HTC has worked with Smart Communications Inc. for the wireless operator's Windows-powered Smart Amazing Phone 2.

The Dopod acquisition, Cheng said, would combine Dopod's rich sales and marketing experience in Asia with HTC's sales and marketing experience in the United States and Europe.

Moving forward, she said HTC was keen on not just securing more partnerships with wireless operators for new devices, but also on strengthening its own brand, not only in Asia but the world over.

"Well-performing brands enjoy strong awareness among consumers, so it is extremely important for HTC to enhance brand recognition by communicating a consistent global brand image. In the future, HTC will provide consumers with consistent global marketing services under the 'HTC' brand name," she said in an e-mail interview. "This comprehensive global marketing strategy will build up real, long-term brand value for HTC and will boost the company's overall competitiveness."

Globe, Palm bring in new smartphone

By Riza T. Olchondra

GLOBE TELECOM AND PALM INC. HAVE just brought in the Treo 750 smartphone, said to be the fastest and first Treo smartphone to take advantage of Globe's High-speed Download Packet Access (HSDPA) or 3.5G wireless broadband network.

The Treo 750 runs on Microsoft's Windows Mobile 5.0.

"The Treo 750 smart phone combines broadband-like speed on Globe's high-speed network with wireless e-mail and rich media capabilities, all within a single device, and brings Palm's world-class ease of use to the Windows Mobile platform," said Palm chief for business (Southeast Asia) Sharon Ee in a statement.

"The addition of HSDPA is just one of the benefits the new Treo 750 smartphone has to offer mobile professionals and businesses nationwide," she added.

"Globe's 3G with HSDPA broadband network brings mobility to the next level by bringing powerful Internet-based and content-rich applications to the hands of our corporate clients," Globe's enterprise group head Jesus C. Romero said.

TREO 750 smartphone

The Treo 750 is a mobile phone with e-mail, messaging, web browsing and organization capabilities—all in a new compact design.

"We're excited to work with Palm to launch the first Windows Mobile HSDPA-enabled Treo smartphone in the Philippines. The Windows Mobile platform has seen accelerated adoption among business users, and the Treo smartphone provides another compelling proposition for organizations considering mobile deployments," said Sandra Goh, business group director for South East Asia Region, Mobile and Embedded Devices Division of Microsoft Corp.

"The Treo 750 builds on the power and flexibility of Microsoft Windows Mobile and Palm's unique design and user experience to deliver a winning solution that connects professionals to their business-critical information while on the go."

BUSINESS*Monday*

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Executives bare legislative wish list

Laws needed to fight corruption in RP, CEOs say

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE 2007 NATIONAL AND LOCAL elections is one of the very few in recent history where business and economic issues were put on the back burner during the long campaign period.

Despite the absence of a real debate on what the business community wants and should get, the issues are very real and often just as important as the political problems confronting the country.

So we took a random sampling (by text messaging, of course!) of business community leaders and officials from companies, big and small, and asked them what laws the incoming legislature should focus on, and which candidates best embodied their views.

The results of the informal poll—from those brave enough to respond—varied widely in terms of which candidates they would back.

In terms of desired legislative action, however, that variety coalesced into a homogenous message, showing perhaps that unity is possible even when different personalities and egos are involved.

Read on.

Robert Sears, executive director, American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines Inc.

"We have a long list."

Alberto Lim, executive director, Makati Business Club

"In the SWS survey, I will vote for five of the top six, two or maybe three of the next six, one from the third tier (the wife of a former legislator), and three candidates of the newest party. No putschists or actors. Sorry, I can't be more specific."

"As for legislation, we need a national tourism policy, the Land Administration and Regulatory Act, cheap medicines, credit information systems and other capital market reforms, rationalization of (fiscal) incentives, and freedom of information, among others."

Jose T. Pardo, chairman, Philippine Savings Bank

PARDO

"I'm invoking my right to remain silent... Too many laws already. New Congress should take inventory of all laws that make difficult doing business in the Philippines, and pass omnibus legislation eliminating these. The objective is to reduce complexity and make the country business- and investor-friendly."

Sergio Edeza, treasurer, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.

EDEZA

"I'll vote for Team Unity, minus Oreta, Sotto, Montano, plus Villar, Pangilinan, and Lacson."

"Foreign ownership of land should be allowed."

Arthur Aguilar, president, National Transmission Corp.

"I can't name my senatoriables because I'm voting for some GO guys. I like Ping's population policy stance. Anyone who can push speedy and proper infrastructure implementation and cut down bureaucracy gets my support."

Enrique Gonzalez, CEO, publicly listed IT firm IPVG

"What laws do I think would benefit this country? 1) Pass the pharma bill which will allow the importation of lower priced medicine, 2) National broadband and computerization of public schools, 3) Liberalize the ownership of real estate—as proven in other countries, this will lead to sustained growth."

Lorenzo Tan, president, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.

TAN

"Legarda, Villar, Escudero, Pangilinan, Lacson, Recto, Cayetano, Arroyo, Pimentel, Angara, Aquino, Roco. For laws: allow foreigners to own land."

Rex Drilon II, president, Ortigas & Co.

"BRAVE PALA SPA: Bautista, Roco, Aquino, Villar, Escudero, Pangilinan, Angara, Lacson, Arroyo, Sison, Paredes, Akbayan. For legislation/Congress action: Corporate Governance Reforms Law; law calling for constitutional convention; impeachment of Abalos for Mega Pacific, Brawner/Ferrer for unjustly disqualifying [Naga City Mayor Jesse] Robredo; prevent GMA from legislating with Eos; anti-dynasty law; anti-trust legislation; review party-list law; consumer protection law."

David Balangue, chair and managing partner, SGV & Co.

BALANGUE

"Laws to amend political system; anti-dynasty law to cover siblings, spouses and children of the incumbents. Law requiring all government contracts and details of all disbursements to be posted on government websites, certified under oath as to accuracy under threat of criminal sanctions. Law that would require weekly publication of all pending corruption cases, and requirement that such cases be resolved with conviction or acquittal within six months, including all appeals."

Antonio Moncupa, president, East West Banking Corp.

"I'll vote for Kapatiran: Bautista, Paredes, Chavez and Kiko Pangilinan."

Jun Ang Lao, chief operating officer, Chemrez Resources Inc.

"I prefer TU in general to maintain the economic momentum. We would like laws to promote infrastructure, improve schooling, and laws to penalize corruption in government office."

Fe Barin, chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission

"I'm still in the process of completing the list for the 12 senators but I will definitely cast my vote for 12. As for desired legislation, I would like to see a new Investment Company Law, a Corporate Recovery Act, and amendments to the Corporation Code. SEC will also propose some amendments to the Securities Regulation Code."

Reynaldo G. Geronimo, partner, RMBSA Law Office

"I'm voting for Kiko. I also want RBB's (late central bank Governor Rafael B. Buenaventura) suggestions on amendments to the BSP charter."

Leonilo Coronel, executive director, Bankers Association of the Philippines

"Will have to beg off. I will have to work with those I will not vote for [on proposed legislative measures]."

Butch Jimenez, senior vice president, PLDT

JIMENEZ

"Chiz, Kiko, Loren. I would want the Senate and Congress to finally pass the laws that will help the development, growth and competitiveness of the University of the Philippines. This has been pending for far too long, yet its impact on the future of our country is immeasurable."

Mark Dumol, president, South Luzon Tollways Corp.

"Joker, Zubiri, Defensor, Pichay, Honasan, Lacson, Villar, Recto, Pangilinan, Angara. For laws—streamline right-of-way acquisition, and rationalize utility regulation."

Rene Bañez, chief governance officer, PLDT

"Will vote for Noynoy, Chiz, Kiko, Loren, Villar, Recto, Joker. We need laws to simplify tax system, protect the environment, revamp the education system, promote corporate governance. We need to address the politicized police and military."

Donald Dee, former president, Employers Confederation of the Philippines

DEE

"Can't disclose my choices for Senate. With regards to proposed bills, we're working together with other organizations and will do shortlisting by June."

Rey David, president, Development Bank of the Philippines

"We have enough laws. What our senators need to do is ensure proper implementation of laws (and get rid of those laws that deter the development of the country). Also, need to ensure that the judiciary is kept honest."

Federico Cuervo, president, Cuervo Appraisers Inc.

"Ed Angara. The Land Administration Reform Act."

Roland Avante, senior executive vice president, Chinatrust Commercial Bank Philippines

"Opposition senators with Recto, Joker Arroyo, Honasan, Pangilinan. Proposed laws: Those that will entice local capitalists to invest here and not abroad."

Noel Bonoan, vice chairman, Manabat, Sanagustin & Co.

"The Kapatiran slate. Sonia Roco. Chiz. Main issue is corruption, widening of the tax base."

Harvard education comes to the Philippines

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FILIPINOS HAVE LONG MADE THEIR PRESence felt in work floors and corporate halls all over the globe, but it seems the world could not get enough of them.

In fact, the world needs more Filipinos even if they serve from within the islands, says Carol Dominguez, president and chief executive of John Clements Consultants Inc. in the Philippines.

"The Philippines increasingly participates in a global economy and in order to compete effectively, we need world-class managers," Dominguez says.

The need to produce such managers, she says, was why John Clements partnered with Harvard Business School Publishing, a wholly-owned, not-for-profit unit of the United States' oldest university.

Race for talent

The partnership aims to address human capital needs in the burgeoning domestic corporate market, mainly by offering learning programs for people on the job.

"With the best-in-class training materials Harvard offers, we can ensure that Filipino managers have the talents and skills to compete on a global basis," Dominguez says.

HBSP is a publisher of online leadership and management programs while John Clements provides services in training and recruitment.

Dominguez says the growing need for management talent with globally competitive functional and leadership skills was particularly observed in the business process outsourcing sector, which has grown considerably in the last half decade.

"With escalating performance requirements, management development programs are more critical than ever to help local BPOs meet the challenge of competitiveness," she adds.

Dominguez cites data from the Business Processing Association of the Philippines, which showed that in 2006, the Philippines generated revenues of $3.5 billion from outsourcing, employing 240,000 people and accounting for over 3 percent of gross domestic product.

This means a growth of 42 percent over the $2.4 billion in revenues in 2004, and a huge increase from 2000 when the outsourcing industry in Manila employed just 2,400 people and had revenues of only $24 million.

Given the pace, the Philippine BPO sector is expected to rake in $12 billion in revenue and employ almost a million people by 2010.

"The most pressing concern of BPO firms is finding, keeping and maintaining talents," Dominguez says. "But companies are too busy with their day-to-day operations (to address the matter sufficiently)."

Growing challenges

Peter McAteer, HBSP vice president and managing director of corporate learning, said during a visit here last week that the biggest challenge for the sector was to keep up with the pace of growth.

"As firms get bigger and have more diverse services, the leadership challenges also grow," McAteer says." One way to create sustainable growth is to continuously upgrade the skills of the talent pool through management and leadership training."

He says the Harvard Business School, through HBSP's partneship with John Clements, would be offering eLearning services in three categories: performance support, facilitator design, and training.

eLearning products include the Harvard ManageMentor, a just-in-time, desktop reference tool covering business topics ranging from communications to working with individuals to strategy implementation.

HBSP is also offering its vast collection of case studies and training courses aimed at helping learning facilitators expand manager skill sets, while honing leadership skills.

Organizations of various sizes can choose from the myriad resources offered in the HBSP collection to create their own programs and syllabi with guidance from HBSP partner John Clements.

Online programs

Another program is the Stepping Up to Management program, which helps first-time managers to learn critical management skills while performing their day-to-day jobs.

"Some can access the programs online or upload it in their networks if they have such facilities," McAteer explained. "What we provide are skills (the content) and online support (the medium)."

"We believe that by offering these one-of-a-kind learning products to the Philippine market, we are in fact taking a major step toward enhancing business and economic competitiveness," says Dominguez.

She says John Clements believes that the partnership with HBSP would help make the Philippines an even more attractive investment destination not just because Filipinos excel in speaking English, but because they are effective managers and leaders as well.

Both officials say the programs would be available for enrollees within half a year, or as soon as the means of delivery—with the available technology here—are determined.

MAP urges political will in fighting corruption

MAPPING THE FUTURE

THE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION of the Philippines (MAP) laments government's insufficient efforts to eliminate graft and corruption in the Philippines.

We urge the government, at this critical juncture, to frontally address the problem of corruption for the benefit of our country.

MAP notes with concern the recent release of a study done by Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) that ranked the Philippines as the worst country among 13 countries in Asia, based on the perceptions of businessmen who follow this issue.

PERC's assessment mirrors the low rank (8th most corrupt out of 36 countries in Asia) given by the Transparency International to the Philippines.

Clearly, a problem remains and greater efforts need to be made to address this very important issue.

Although last year, there was a significant increase in foreign investment, it is still one of the lowest in Asia.

Discouraging investments

Corruption further needs to be reduced to improve total investments, which are underperforming due to low levels of domestic investments. As it appears, corruption could be discouraging for both local and foreign investors.

Consequently, loss of investors has translated to fewer new jobs being created.

The government has taken counter-corruption steps, but they affect only the tip of the iceberg.

Objective observers, including the World Bank, say that we must set some strong examples to show that if you are corrupt, you will be penalized.

As there is corruption by the needy and the greedy, each may deserve a different approach.

To demonstrate political will, big time corruptors need to be caught, tried, and jailed to send a clear message that no one is above the law.

We should nevertheless commend the government for the counter-corruption steps it has already taken, and we should acknowledge that there has been some successful action, but they do not go far enough.

MAP believes that fuller focus on the following recommendations would more strongly address corruption:

1) In addition to the need to accelerate effective programs against smugglers and tax evaders, we urge the government to implement the following nine-point approach in fighting corruption in the Philippines as recommended by World Bank: (a) reduce opportunities for corruption by policy reforms and deregulation; (b) reform campaign finance; (c) increase public oversight; (d) reform budget process; (e) improve meritocracy in the civil service; (f) target selected departments and agencies; (g) enhance sanctions against corruption; (h) develop partnerships with the private sector; and (i) support judicial reform.

2) The government's thrust to simplify bureaucracy (the anti-red tape law) and to enhance transparency can play a major role in reducing corruption.

Computerization of as many governmental processes as possible, especially in procurement, would cut down opportunities for corruption.

Greater transparency

3) More transparency is definitely needed in the awarding of contracts for major infrastructure and public utility projects. We need to set clear cost benchmarks. Selection and eligibility criteria should follow international standards.

Inviting international donor agencies to be part of the review and awarding team, even if they are not directly involved in financing the project, could help make the process more credible.

4) The government should stop the implementation of EO 608 on "Establishing a National Security Clearance System for Government Personnel with Access to Classified Matters and for Other Purposes" because it does not promote transparency and it will result in further corruption.

5) Activation of the Multisectoral Anti-Corruption Council that will consolidate anti-corruption programs and initiatives.

6) Our justice system should ensure speedy resolution of corruption cases especially that of the fertilizer scam, which appears to have been buried and forgotten.

The government needs to recognize that corruption is a major problem and needs to move more aggressively to address it.

To say it is only a perception ignores the reality that business decisions are based on perception.

If indeed corruption is less than perceived, then the government should do a better job in disseminating accurate information.

MAP is looking for ways to be helpful in fighting the scourge of corruption.

It strongly subscribes to the belief that all of us should be manifesting the spirit of country above self and be promoting leadership by example. What is urgently needed is a strong will to do what needs to be done.

Vote wisely

For now, what is imperative is that all Filipinos, who are eligible to vote, should ensure that they do not cast their vote for candidates who are known to be corrupt.

The MAP is a 57-year-old management organization whose 760 members represent a cross-section of CEOs, COOs and other top management practitioners from the largest local and multinational companies operating in the Philippines.

MAP's mission is to promote management excellence through sharing of best management practices; educational activities that enhance the knowledge and skills of management practitioners and educators nationwide through learning forums and discussions; training and development programs that produce professional managers; networking and building alliances among its members for exploring and sharing business opportunities; and advocacy for reforms that help shape a brighter future for the Philippines.

Amb. Albert F. del Rosario, chair of Gotuaco del Rosario & Associates, and former Philippine ambassador to the United States, is the president of MAP for 2007.

Other officers of the MAP for 2007 are Edgar O. Chua, chair and president of Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., vice president; Baltazar N. Endriga, managing partner of Endriga, Manangu & Associates, CPA's (EMA); Pacita U. Juan, CEO of Figaro Coffee Co., assistant treasurer; and Senen C. Bacani, president of Ultrex Management and Investments Corp., secretary.

(Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

I am
the
way,
the truth
and
the life.
No one
comes
to the
Father
except
through
Me.
John 14:6

RENATO ONGCHANGCO LORENZANA

A great actuarial scientist,
grooved his way into our Lord's loving embrace
on May 12, 2007.

Cause: An immeasurable imagination

An amazing man who made **Rose Marie** the happiest woman on earth, gave **Tin, Toffer, Katz, Yen** and **Kevin** the best childhood they could ever have, welcomed **Mike** with open arms, became a doting Lolo to **Mika** and was a buddy-on-call to his siblings, **Mon (†), Bobbit, Carmen, Chona** and his many, many friends.

His remains lie in state at Loyola Chapels-Cubao, 20th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City.

Burial Mass will be at 8:00 a.m., May 17th at Loyola Chapels Cubao, Quezon City.

Interment follows at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

In Loving Memory
on the 5th Death Anniversary of

ARTURO SIDDONS YABUT
"TORO"

1962 – 2002

Masses will be offered today, May 14, 2007, at the following churches:

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Orense St., Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City	5:30 AM
Sts. Peter & Paul, P. Burgos St., Makati City	6:00 AM
National Shrine of the Sacred Heart, San Antonio Village, Makati City	6:00 AM
St. Andrew, The Apostle Parish, Bel-Air II, Makati City	6:30 AM
St. John Bosco Parish, Pasay Road, Makati City	6:30 AM
St. Alphonsus Mary De Liguori Chapel, Magallanes Village, Makati City	6:15 AM 7:00 AM 12:15 PM 6:00 PM
Manila Memorial Park, Yabut Mausoleum, Parañaque City	5:00 PM
Sanctuario De San Antonio Parish, Forbes Park, Makati City	12:00 NN
Sto. Niño De Paz Chapel, Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati City	12:00 NN
Nuestra Sra. De Gracia Parish, Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City	6:15 PM

The family requests relatives and friends to remember him in their prayers.

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JOSEFA "PITA" TRINIDAD VALLARTA

(of Hagonoy, Bulacan and San Isidro, Nueva Ecija)

Peacefully joined our Creator and her beloved husband Cesar Sr. on May 12, 2007 at the age of 81.

Her loving children **Paquito** (†) and **Belen, Bobby** and **Len, Balu** and **Loli, Benjie** and **Susan, Pet** and **Alet, Omie** and **Tess, Bobot** and **Myrna** and **Chonie**; grandchildren, great-grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in prayers for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Her remains lie in state at St. Rita Parish Church, Philam Subd., Quezon City until today, May 14, 2007 and will be transferred to Vallarta Residence in San Isidro, Nueva Ecija tomorrow, May 15, 2007 at 8:00 a.m.

Interment will be on May 17, 2007 after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at San Isidro Catholic Cemetery.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Presentacion Santos-Siasoco, MD

20 November 1930 – 22 April 2007

express our heartfelt gratitude to those who condoled with us, offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers, cards and messages of sympathy, gave donations, visited and kept vigil, attended the funeral rites and memorial services, and who in countless ways helped and comforted us during our moments of bereavement.

Please continue to pray for her eternal repose in heaven.

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Tel No 893-1320. Local 5388

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

One (1) Package Fully Automated Chemistry Analyzer under CE-702610
Approved Budget: PHP 2,500,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o Diana Marie Z. Lejano starting May 7, 2007, from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P500.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on May 17, 2007, 2:00 p.m. at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Office Wall Clock Time) of May 30, 2007. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee II

(PDI–May 14, 2007)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel. No. 893-1320 Local 5388

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Various Breathing Apparatus under GH 708866, PP 701408 and PP 701409
Approved Budget: PHP 6,050,100.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o Ms. Diana Lejano starting May 10, 2007, from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP 2,000.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on May 18, 2007, 10:00 A.M. at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department, 1/F Building 5 at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Wall Clock Time) of June 1, 2007. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

BAC Chairman

(PDI–May 14, 2007)

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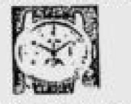

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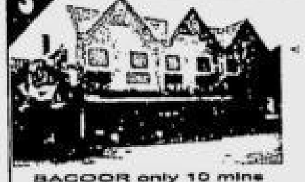

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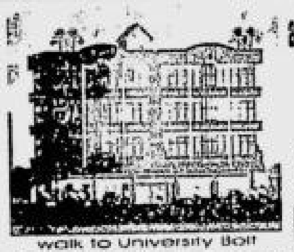

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People, Events & Products

Graphic Expo 2007 competitions begin

GRAPHIC EXPO'S COMPETITIONS on animation and digital art have begun, with entries now pouring in from professional and amateur graphic and digital designers and artists, photographers, animators, Web masters, multimedia specialists, design studios, production houses, training institutes, and schools and universities.

The aspirants in both competitions have up to May 15 only to submit their final entries.

The winning works will be exhibited at the Philippine Trade Training Center on Roxas Boulevard from June 6 to 9 during the staging of Graphic Expo 2007, the country's premier trade show on desktop and Web publishing, digital photography and imaging, pre-press, print production, large format printing, multimedia, and animation.

With the theme "The Filipinos at War", the 6th Animation Competition offers cash prices for the grand winner and the 1st and 2nd runners-up in each of the two categories-Amateur/Student level and Professional-plus the honor and distinction of winning in this prestigious event.

Contestants can use any 3D animation software to develop their entries. The concept should be original, entertaining, and wholesome. Use of logos, brand names, and foul words and language is not allowed. Maximum running time for animation entry is two minutes for amateur/student level, and three minutes for professional.

Each entry must include concept and storyboard, name of company/school/training institute, contact person, telephone, fax, e-mail and mobile numbers.

Copyright infringement will not be allowed and list of sources of audio-video materials used should be submitted with the entries.

The entries should be submitted in CD Rom format using Quick Time with 800x600 resolution, no compression. Audio format should be in 44khz 16 bits stereo.

For the Annual Digital Art Competition 2007, the categories are digital graphic design, digital fine art, and Web design. Prizes in cash and in kind await the winner in each category.

For preliminary judging, entries must be printed on A4-size photo or inkjet paper, except for Web design where the works must be submitted in the form of URL.

The contestants can use scanned imagery and digital painting techniques through various available graphics software. Not acceptable are images, symbols, or artworks whose copyright belongs to another person.

Each entry must be accompanied by a one-paragraph concept brief. A contestant can submit unlimited number of entries, each with an enclosed personal data sheet containing his full name, address, company/school, telephone, e-mail, website, and theme/title of entry.

For the Web design, entries should reflect the designers' creativity, originality, and understanding of the unique challenges in this field. Web sites will be judged for appearance, flexibility, navigation, interactivity and suitability for their target audiences. Creativity in solving the problems of designing for the electronic media is of primary consideration.

Each entry should include the name of the artist, address, company/school/training institute, contact person, telephone, fax and mobile numbers, and e-mail address, and must be submitted to Fiera de Manila (Zen Building, 8352 Mayapis Street, San Antonio Village, Makati City; call center 896-0639, 896-0637, 899-6216; e-mail fiera@info.com.ph; website www.fmi.com.ph, www.graphicexpo.com.ph). P200 per entry must be paid upon submission of entries.

Awarding and announcement of winners will take place at the formal opening ceremonies of Graphic Expo 2007 on June 6.

Now on its 12th year, Graphic Expo is supported by Epson, Hewlett Packard, Design Agencies Association of the Philippines, eArt Philippines, IdN Club Philippines, Zone V Camera Club, Philippine Center for Creative Imaging, Outdoor Advertising Association of the Philippines, and Animation Council of the Philippines.

ATI Group gets ZF South East Pte Ltd's vote

ATI GROUP, ONE OF THE country's oldest engine rebuilding and automatic transmission companies, has recently been formally appointed by ZF South East Pte Ltd as the sole dealer for passenger car automatic gearboxes (except 4HP20) and power steering systems.

As one of the ZF dealers in the Southeast Asian region, ATI Group is also authorized to distribute aftermarket OEM products such as Sach's (shock absorbers, pressure plates, springs), Boge (Shock absorbers, engine mounts, transmission mounts, and axle body mounts), and ZF Parts (steering rack and pinion assembly, automatic and manual transmission parts and steering pumps).

"With the appointment of ATI Group as ZF South East Asia Pte Ltd as partner, we bring to the business ATI's 20 years of technological expertise in servicing automotive components," says Alex Yague, ATI Group's senior technical consultant and product analyst.

"With ZF Trading's vast array of OEM spec parts, sports fans can retrofit their cars with technology derived from racing experience (Formula One, DTM, and even the prestigious Le Man's 24 Hours. Having original OE spec parts and components keep you driving on the safe side," states Marty Diaz de Rivera, managing director of ATI Group. ZF Trading is the world's leading company in the international replacement and OE parts market and the leading supplier for power train and suspension technology for European, American, Japanese and Korean automotive companies.

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Banking sector bad loan ratio down to 5.28%

BSP's Tetangco says industry on way back to pre-crisis level

By Michelle V. Remo

TETANGCO

THE SHARE OF NONPERFORMING loans to total bank loans went down further to 5.28 percent in March from 5.53 percent in February, putting the banking industry on its way to fully recovering from the Asian currency crisis.

According to a report by the BSP released last Friday, the drop in the the nonperforming loan ratio was due to the decline in the amount of soured loans and the increase in total loans granted.

BSP data showed that nonperforming loans hit P108.7 billion as of March, down 4.5 percent from P113.87 billion the previous month.

Total loan portfolio, on the other hand, increased by 0.10 percent to P2.06 trillion from P2.058 trillion in February.

With the steady decline, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. is optimistic that the banking industry's NPL ratio should drop to between 3 to 4 percent by the end of the year to reach pre-crisis levels.

The NPL ratio is one of the most closely watched indicators of the banking industry's health. At the height of the currency crisis that hit the region in the late 1990s, the NPL ratio hovered at double-digit levels.

BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla also said that the banks' improved NPL ratio was due to the banks' conscious efforts to avoid bad practices in the past, such as indiscriminate lending activities, that partly caused the 1997 crisis.

"This (decline in the NPL ratio) reflects the strong effort of the banking industry to clean up its balance sheet while increasing the pace of lending," Espenilla told reporters on the sidelines of the 2007 Citi Microentrepreneur of the Year Award held last week at Century Park Hotel in Manila.

Tetangco agreed, noting that the banks were able to improve their NPL ratio without going to the BSP for a bailout package, unlike in other countries.

But while the BSP commended the banking industry for its efforts to improve its financial health, Tetangco also said there was a need to further boost lending, which hardly moved over the past few years.

He said that to encourage banks to lend more, Congress should pass the bill seeking to establish a credit information bureau that will inform the banks of the credit standing of borrowers.

Armed with more information about the borrowers, banks would be more willing to lend to those with good credit standing, he said.

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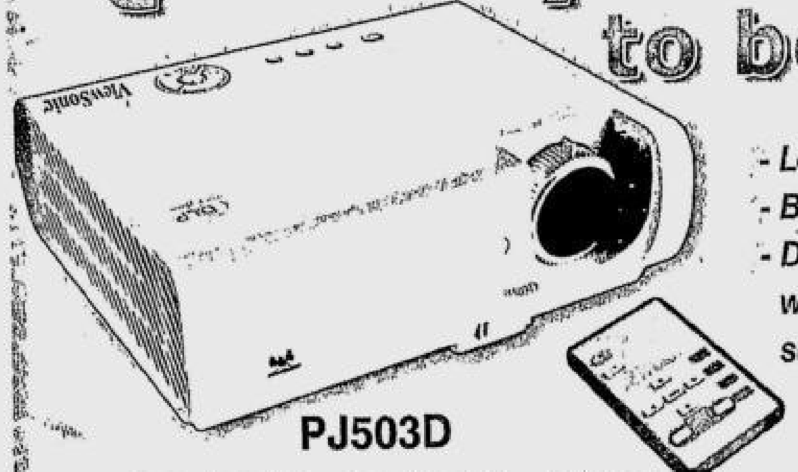

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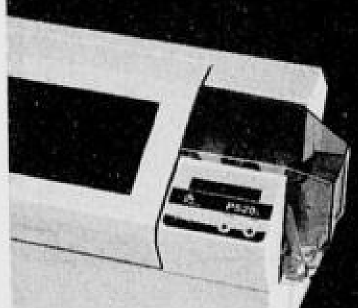

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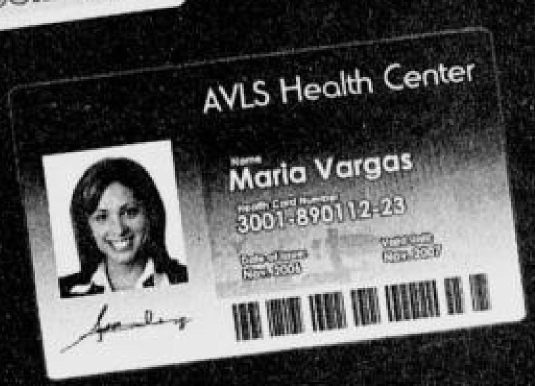

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Investment Funds	Fund Classification	Net Yield		
		2 - Year Return*	Full Year	
			2006	2005
PESO FUNDS				
Metrofund Starter	Money Market	20.47%	10.80%	7.63%
Metrofund Elite	Bond-Intermediate Term	25.61%	13.70%	10.23%
Metrofund Peak Earner	Bond-Medium Term	22.43%	13.74%	8.42%
Metro Invest Plus	Bond-Intermediate Term	22.66%	12.69%	8.25%
Metro Capital Growth Fund	Balanced Fund	69.71%	41.24%	13.75%
DOLLAR FUNDS				
Metrodollar Phil. Liquid Fund	Bond-Intermediate Term	14.84%	7.06%	5.74%
Metrodollar Phil. Bond Fund	Bond-Medium Term	21.66%	9.69%	9.17%
Metro Dollar Asian Bond Fund	Bond-Medium Term	6.91%	4.27%	0.99%

* Cumulative net return from April 2005 to April 30, 2007.

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LIFESTYLE

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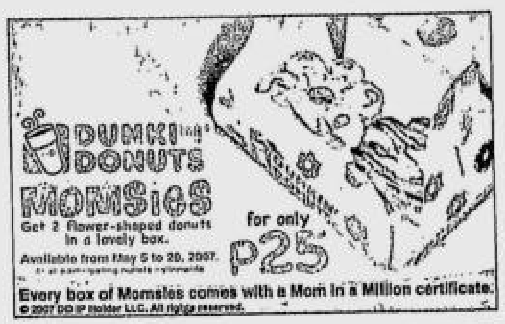
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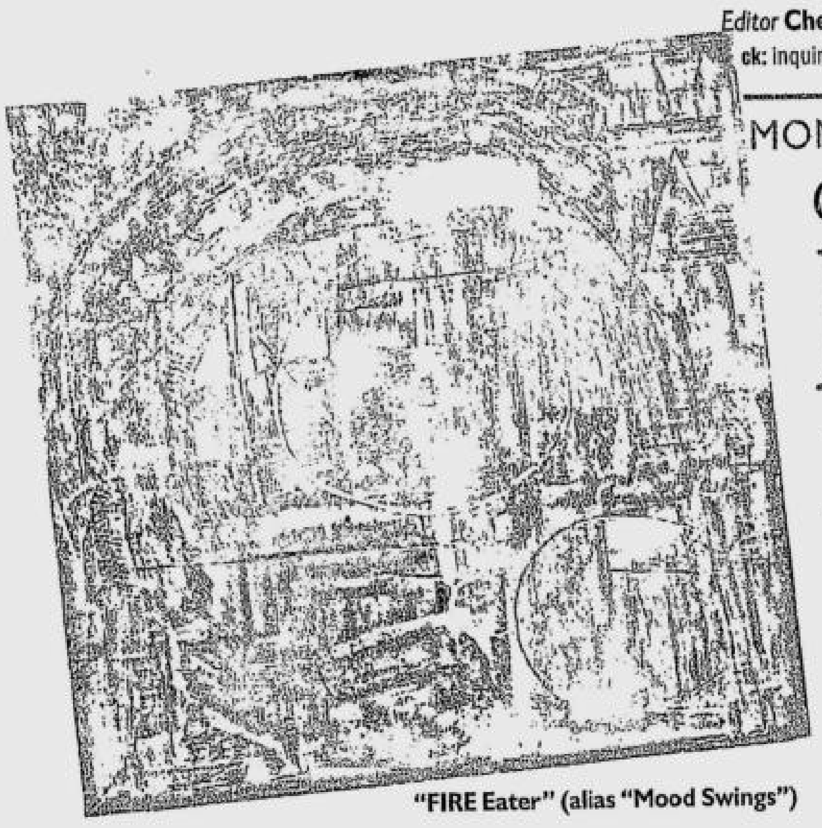

"FIRE Eater" (alias "Mood Swings")

CARATING IN SINGAPORE

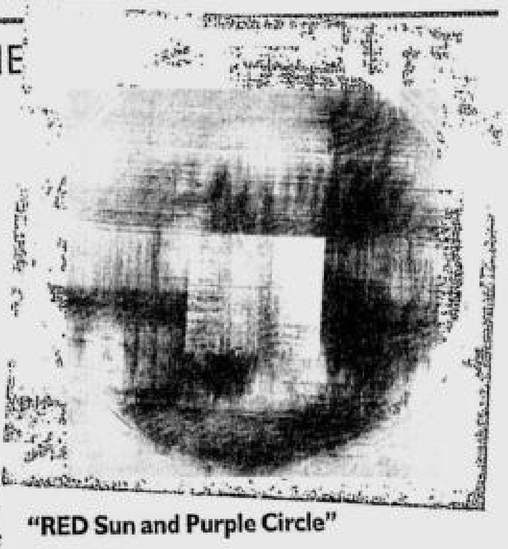
Master plays with colors

By James P. Ong
Contributor

THREE YEARS AGO, THE artist Norberto Carating joined three other Filipino painters in a group exhibit in Singapore, "Forum for Four," at Art Forum Gallery. It was there that collectors on that side of the continent were attracted to the "mystical quality" of his works.

"[They are] both arresting and meditative," says Art Forum owner Marjorie Chu.

And so it came as no surprise the reclusive artist was asked to return—this time with a solo exhibit. That happens this Saturday, and it is expected to be just as well-attended as his last exhibition overseas, at Karin Weber Gallery in Hong Kong two years ago.


"RED Sun and Purple Circle"

The show "New Works by Lito Carating" takes off from the artist's Hong Kong exhib-

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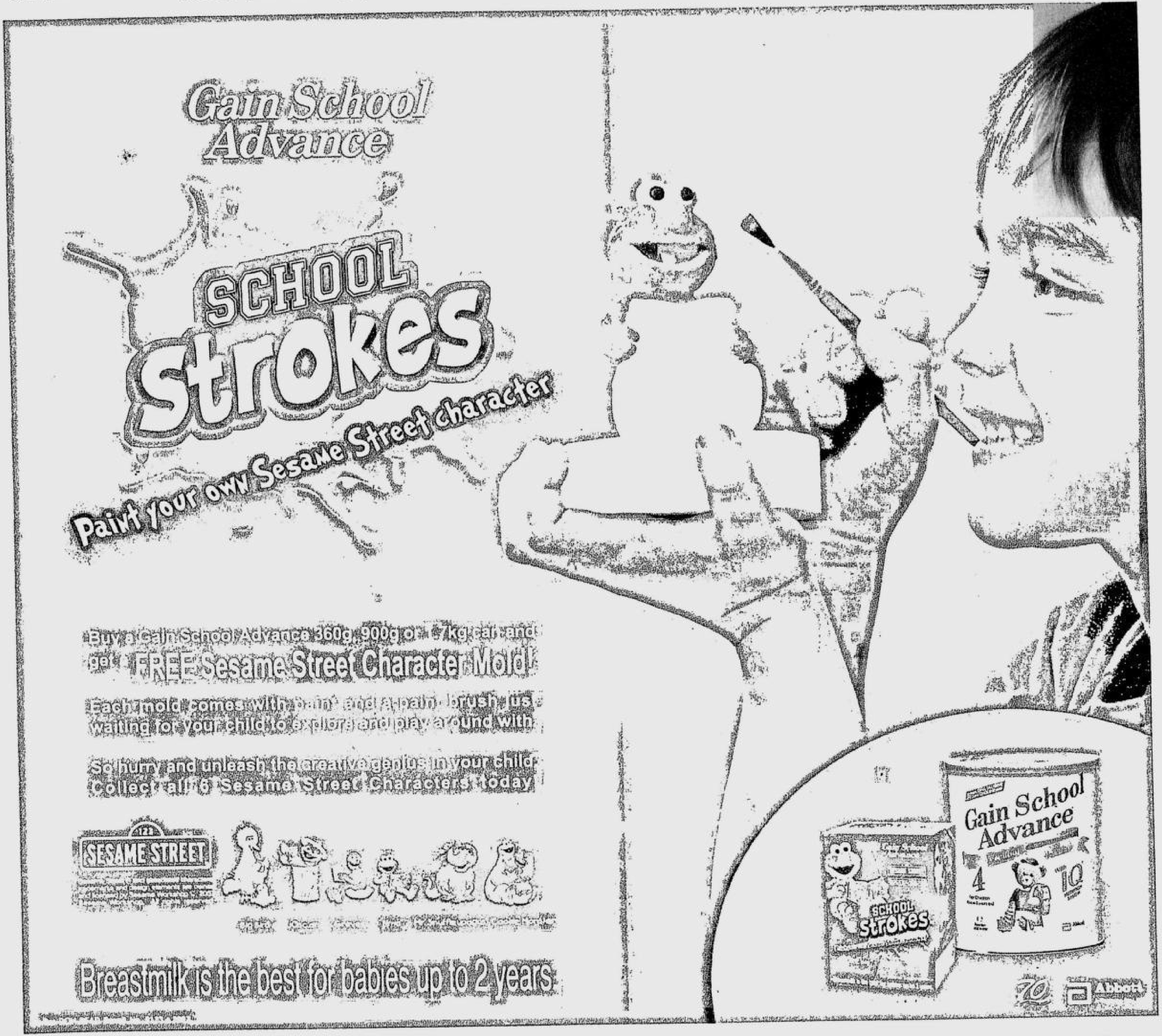
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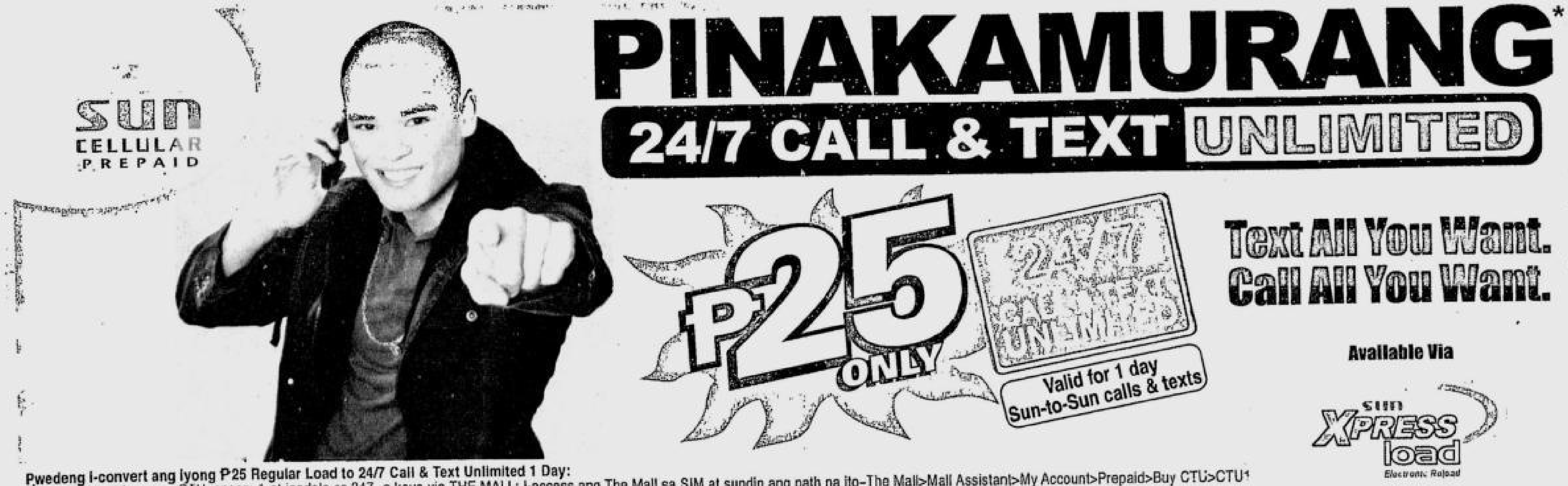
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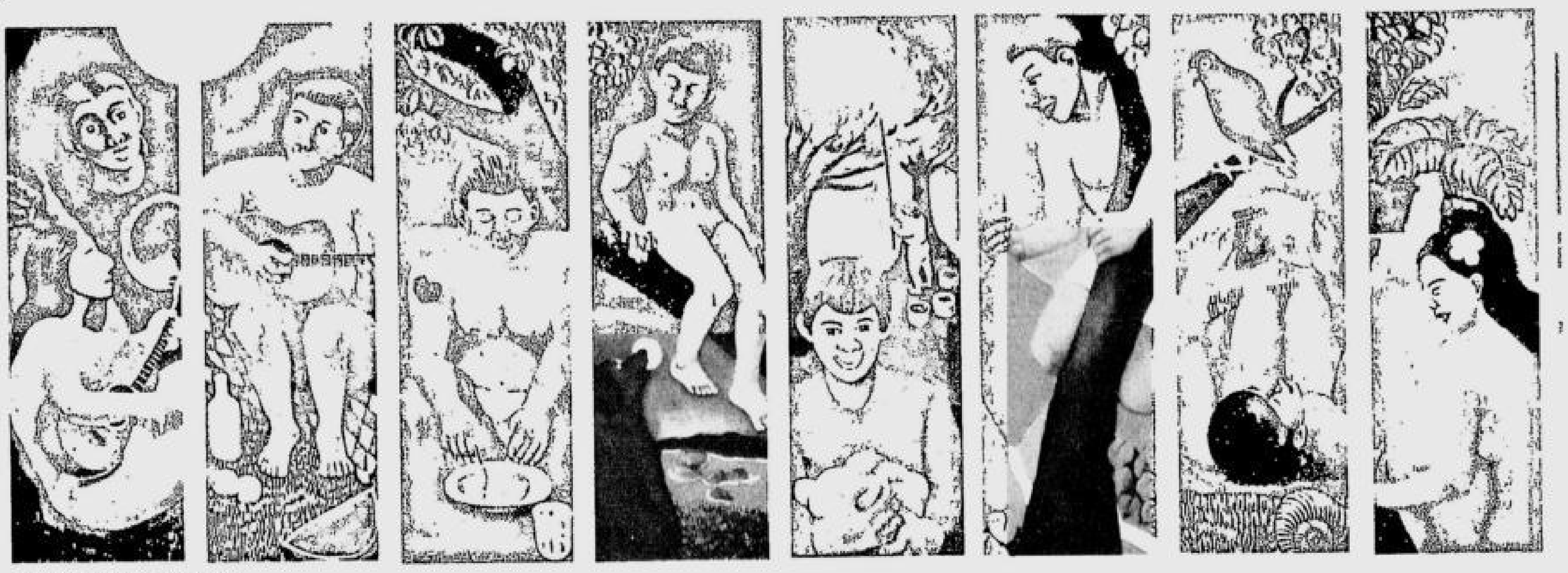


"SUMMER Has Come!"

The virtues of Filipinism

By Constantino C. Tejero

FILIPINISM, OUR VERSION OF Orientalism, has become something of a curse in the art world. Synonymous with regionalism, thus parochialism, it simplifies ideas and breeds clichés, thus limits the imagination.

A case in point is Fernando Amorsolo, an otherwise master colorist and classic formalist who has long been derided by modernists for his Filipinism. Although our first National Artist for the Visual Arts had painted numerous portraits, odalisques and grim scenes of wartime Manila, mention his name and one automatically associates it with bucolic life and rural Philippines.

Filipinism becomes a blessing when instead of highlighting its limitations the artist gives it a little spin, breathes new life into it, and makes it a way to celebrate life by utilizing the riotous colors and complex forms naturally abounding in these islands. This is what Manuel Gamboa has been doing in his paintings.

The autodidact artist is presenting 26 pieces in oil on canvas in his solo exhibit "Summer Has Come!" on May 21-June 1 in the Philippine Center Art Gallery at 556 Fifth Ave., New York, NY.

Consider the eponymous series of eight paintings that forms the exhibit's centerpiece. Placed closely side by side, the slender pieces reveal a vivid tableau of mostly naked bodies spending the summer outdoors. Separated, they look as though a long mural had been broken up into individual portraits.

Evoking the naïve forms and simplified perspective of Henri Rousseau imbued with the mysterious air of a Gauguin and the vigorous coloration of Matisse, these pieces have actually subsumed Filipinism and directed the viewer's attention to the whole's formal quality.

But it is stereotypical Filipinism: picnicking on the grass, strumming on guitars, bathing on the river, picking ripe mangoes, flying a kite, gamboling with Bantay.

Peculiar internationalism

Conversely, the artist has spun Filipinism and turned it into a kind of internationalism. Though the scenes are recognizably Philippine and the physiognomies Filipino, they could be anywhere else.

"Fiesta Filipina" might as well be a scene in Mexico. The drinking buddies giving a *despedida* to an overseas Filipino worker in "Mabuhay Joe" could be a gathering of revolutionaries in Central America.

"In the Garden," "Tango Fantasy" and "Dueto de Amor" could have been set in the decaying mansions of South American aristocracy. The tourists in "Tagaytay on Horseback" look like gauchos in the pampas.

Some even look European, such as the picnickers in "Beach Bonding," or the lads and lasses in "Sagalas Photo Op" and "Consortes Photo Op." The self-portrait "The Painter and the Model" is posed like a French painter's.

The matron in "Nicotine Break" looks like any world-weary American tourist. "Flower Festival" could as well be a portrait of a Polynesian dancer.

Closer to home are the pieces depicting Palawan natives, such as "The Beach Bounty," "The Day's Catch," "Mother and Son." But then they could be Micronesian islanders.

These pieces are remarkable not only for their coloration but also for the compositional skill on display. In "The Day's Catch," for instance, the fluid segmentation of space is consummate. In "Mother and Son," the frontal presentation of the nude forms exudes an effortless effrontery and has a directness that's quite modern.

Strong representation

Gamboa says he directly paints the figures on the canvas chiefly from his imagination, without the use of drawing. "To compose, I just put the verticals here, the horizontals there, a spiral there, a rest space here—then I fill them up with figures."

A Geology graduate from University of the Philippines, who later took up Strategic Management in Wharton School of Economics then went on to become a senior executive in San Miguel Corp., Gamboa started painting only upon retirement.

He was first drawn to the naïf of Rousseau, but also counts Cézanne, Matisse and Degas among his favorites. The first-time viewer of his work, however, would think of Gauguin, being drawn first to that blending of darkness and incandescence that contributes so much to the mystique of Gauguin's work.

"Some people say my paintings look like Gauguin's," admits Gamboa. "But there is no effort [on my part to imitate him]."

This is the fourth time he is showing his works in the Philippine Center in New York. Once again he is called upon to be our representative.

It is one other virtue of Filipinism, that it allows for strongly representing our country abroad through showcasing indelible images of our landscapes and traditions.

We know, of course, that this is not all that there is in the state of our nation. But then, no one artist can encompass the whole of creation.

Master plays . . .

From page C1

it—inspired by circular shapes and metallic acrylic in shades of bronze, gold and silver-gold—and delves into more playful territory.

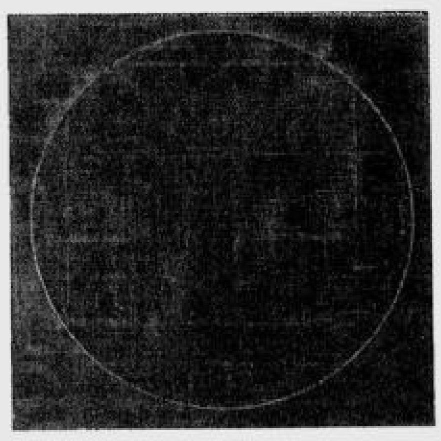
This time, Carating admits to being less rigid and more experimental with his palette. He also wanders beyond round shapes and steps into squares and rectangles.

Chu says she is drawn to the artist's works exactly because of his command of colors. "The richness of antique gold, copper mixed with ethereal red and lapis blue," she explains.

Chu opened Art Forum in 1971, hoping it could be a bridge between artists, art lovers and collectors. During her search for artists, she concentrated her efforts on Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Singapore. She discovered the special language of contemporary Southeast Asian art.

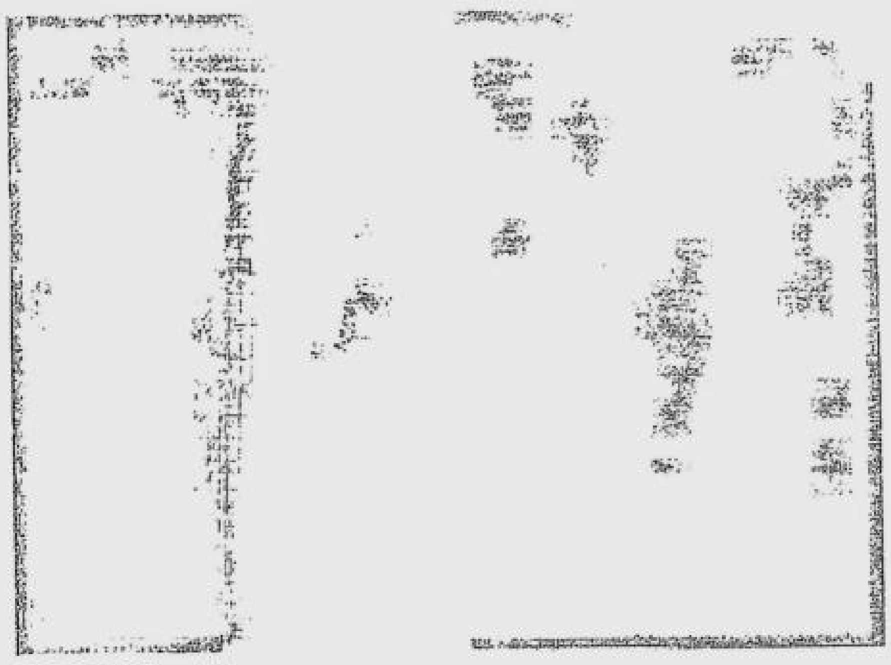
She singles out Carating's pieces for their texture ("as if the surface was a woven textile") and their effect on viewers ("the composition denotes timelessness and perpetuity").

That timelessness is especially evident in "Sun and Moon" and "Counting Sheep." Both are hypnotic with their somber shades of blue that viewers are lulled into serenity.



"COUNTING Sheep"

"RED Sun and Waiting Moon"



"ORANGE Clouds"

But art for Carating—at least, his art—is never predictable. That he expresses most effectively in "Fire Eater" (alias "Mood Swings"), where the artist lets loose and slapdashes green, blue, orange and gold into a homage to primary colors. In this particular work, the artist masterfully hints at irony. He shows mastery of his technique by violating them.

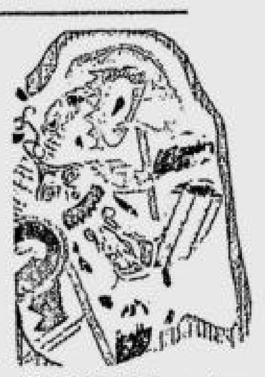
"One could look at his work and each time discover something new in it," says Chu.

Since Carating began reaping art awards in 1969, he has been representing the country in exhibits abroad, and showing everyone his ability to turn his works into instant classics. He has become one of the masters of Philippine art.

"New Works by Lito Carating" runs May 19-31 at Art Forum (www.artforum.com.sg), 82 Cairnhill Road, Singapore; tel. no. +65-67373448.

VISUAL ARTS

De Veyras at West



"CAST of Characters in a Lonely Planet" II

West Gallery (Mary Santos Artcade, West Avenue, QC) presents "Cast of Characters in a Lonely Planet," an exhibit featuring collaborative works by brother-and-sister tandem Patrick and Sarah de Veyra, May 15-June 15. Inspired by Antoine de Saint-Exupery's "Little Prince" and the Book of Ecclesiastes, the De Veyras explore alienation and melancholy of an unredeemed human existence. Each composition features linear drawings of invented and anonymous characters that illustrate the fascinating yet convoluted roles that human beings portray. Call 4119221 or 4110336.

Terra-cotta sculpture contest

The Open Terra-Cotta Sculpture Competition is now accepting entries. It is open to all artists, with no restrictions on age. The entry must be a sculpture, done in 85-percent terra cotta, and can be painted or glazed. The work should not be larger than 2x2x2 ft or smaller than 1x1x1 ft. For initial screening, an applicant must send digital photos of the entries in jpeg format, not exceeding 300dpi.

Each applicant is allowed up to three entries. Deadline is May 30. Call (035)2251687 or send SMS to 0921-3400686. E-mail dumaguete_terracotta@yahoo.com.

"FERN Leaf"

Chan at Mag:net

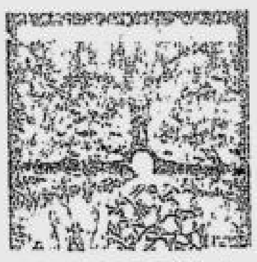
Eng Chan's 7th one-man exhibit of new sculptures will be on view at Mag:net Paseo (Paseo Center, Paseo de Roxas and Sedeno Streets, Makati) on May 15-June 5. After using fiberglass in his previous sculptures, the artist now forays into sculptures of steel mounted on stone bases. Chan bent scrap steel such as old wrought-iron chairs and long steel rods in his minimalist creations to mimic two-dimensional outlines. Call 8177895 or visit www.magnet.com.ph.

Ilonggo artists at Graphitto

"FRAGRANCE of May," by Pierre Patricio

Galleri Graphitto (2/L, Mabini Wing, Robinsons Place, Iloilo City) presents "Flores de Mayo," a group exhibit of Ilonggo artists Raji Alvarado, Angel Alegre, Czar Arro, Lester Amacio, Benji Belgica, Bibo Belgica, Allan Cabalfin, John Paul Castillo, Edmar Colmo, Ed Defensor, Guijo Dueñas, Joey Esturis, Vic Fario, Edgar Gonzales, Katrina Gonzales, Melvin Guierhem, Dodot Manzano, Earl Martirizar, Jomari Moleta, Rheo Nepomuceno, Fred Orig, Pierre Patricio, Fundador Tan, Joemil Valenzuela and Pio Zoluaga. The exhibit runs May 18-31. Call 0920-2074930.

Legaspi at Ayala



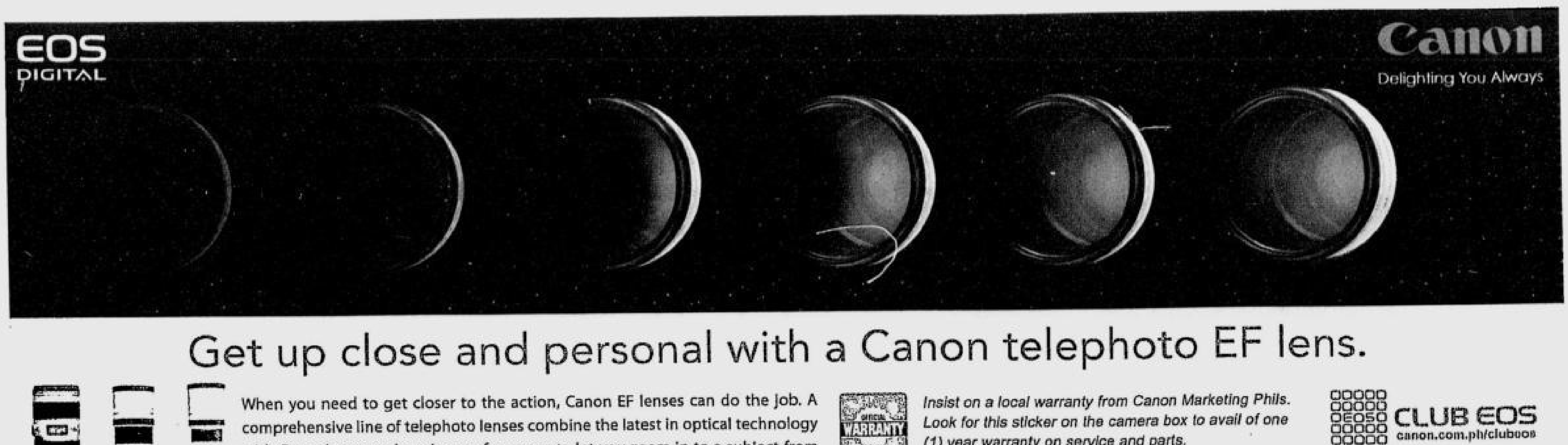
"ORCHARD Behind Our House"

"Once upon a Daster," an exhibit of paintings by Raymond Legaspi, will be on view May 15-28 at ArtistSpace, 2/F, Glass Wing, Ayala Museum. The artist uses *dasters* as canvases within a canvas as he depicts scenes from his memories of Silay, Negros Occidental. Call 7577117-21 local 31.

Museum Day 2007 at UP

The UP Jorge B. Vargas Museum (UPVM) marks the 2007 International Museum Day with the theme "Museums and Universal Heritage." Caring for Philippine Collections, a four-day seminar-workshop on museum conservation under professionals from UP and Casa Asia of Spain, begins May 18.

Three new exhibitions will also open, to run until June 17. UPVM's annual open exhibition "Kulay at Pagkukulay" at Edge Gallery (1/F) presents works by various artists using different styles and interpretations of UPVM's exhibition theme for 2007, "Colors in Philippine Art." "Speaking in Images: Representations of the Philippines and Japan in Political Cartoons" features 50 reproductions of archival political cartoons from the 1930s to the 1990s, at the Landing Gallery (3/F). IMD 2007 at the UPVM ends with Junior Museum Guide 3, a five-day workshop for kids 8-12 years old, starting May 22. Call 9281927, or e-mail vargasmuseum@gmail.com. Also call 0919-8151996, 0927-4198533.



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NATIONAL BOOKSTORE:
A Diverse History, A Strong Institution, A Filipino Standard

Its distinctive red and white stripes can be seen everywhere when the school year begins. It's the first line of support for the hardworking student and office person. It's a bookworm's paradise. The mere mention of its name never fails to ring a bell. Its legacy transcends generations.

National Bookstore proves itself to be one of the largest and most durable entrepreneurial ventures in the country, forged by 65 years of expertise in the books trade. With its vast merchandise of school and office supplies, textbooks and best-sellers, and extending to 72 branches throughout the archipelago, National Bookstore has been listed as the 10th largest retailer in the Philippines in 2004 by Retail Asia Magazine. But despite its successes, National Bookstore still exudes a humble and motherly air within its aisles, keeping its warm spot at the heart of every Filipino.

A quaint little shop in Escolta, Manila and the perseverance of a young Socorro Ramos gave birth to the National Bookstore we know today. At a time of civil and social distress when the Japanese invaded our shores, "Coring" as Socorro Ramos was fondly called by her peers, still managed to find her way in her enterprise. With the help of her devoted husband Jose, the business pulled through despite a somewhat painful change in their supplies and books trade. Strict censorship and destruction of American literature and publications during wartime forced the couple to shift their trade to soaps, slippers, confections, and other merchandise. It's a far cry from a being a bookstore, but they had to keep themselves afloat one way or the other.

The advent of Liberation struck the second blow to the Ramos couple's enterprise. Many edifices and business establishments in Manila were destroyed, not sparing the Ramos' little stall shop in Escolta. Yet they refused to succumb to adversity. With their will and few remaining resources, Coring and Jose were able to replant the new seeds of National Bookstore-a small, shanty-like house at the corner of Soler and Avenida. They went back to selling school supplies, books and other similar wares, using the shanty's door as the store's makeshift counter. Their business was then seeing better days with the post war business boom.

But misfortune crept into the business once more in 1948. The business had fallen victim to nature's rage when typhoon Gene destroyed the store and soaked all the merchandise. Yet perseverance and will to succeed has prevailed in their desire to rebuild National Bookstore once more. Fueled by sleepless nights and endless toil, the Ramos couple was able to build a two story building in Rizal Avenue, where behind its doors lie their new wares-and the start of a bright future for National Bookstore.

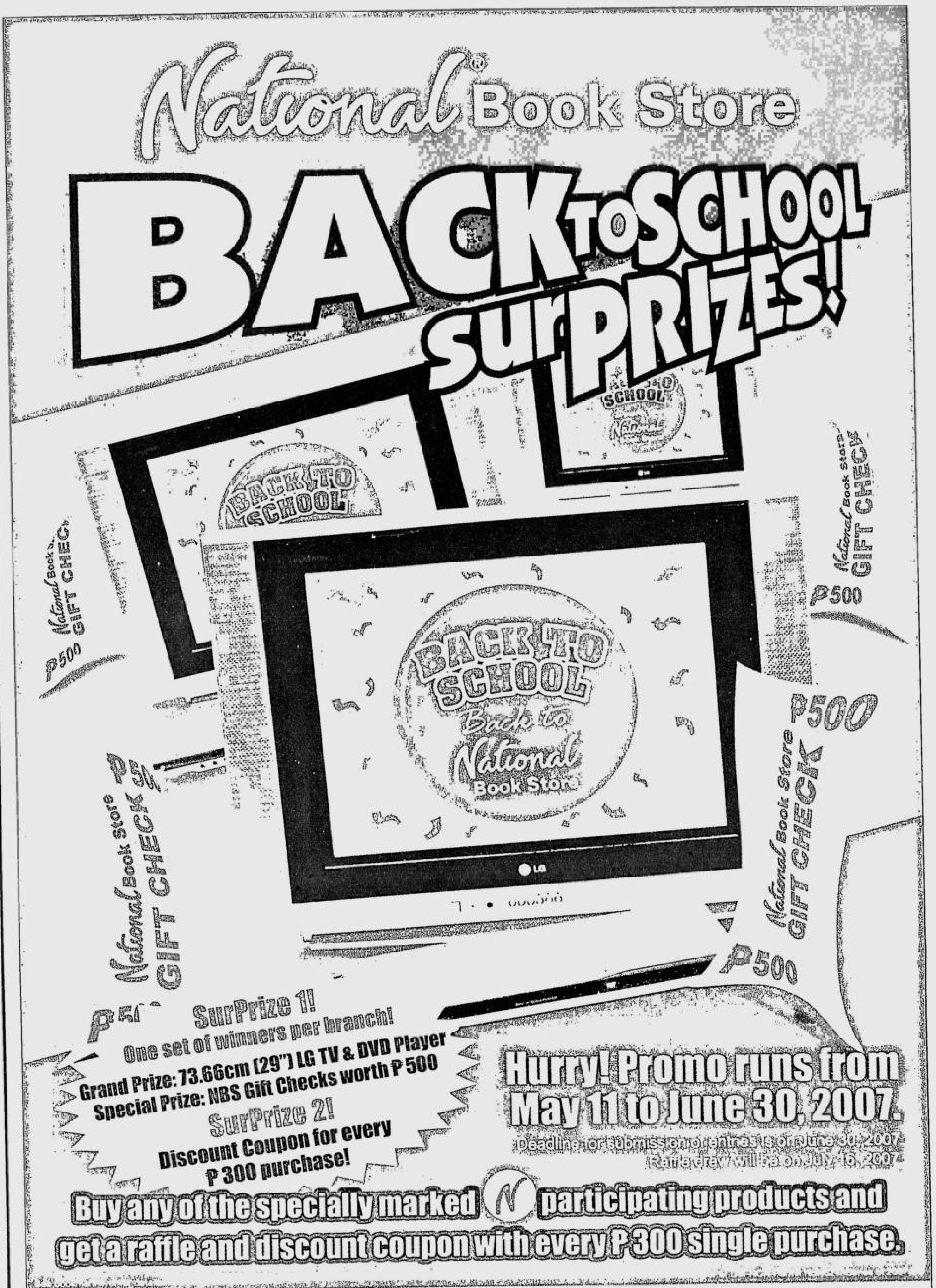
The years that followed brought about positive changes in the blossoming life of National Bookstore. Ever the thinking entrepreneur, Socorro Ramos decided to produce her own line of cards using original artworks and photographs of Philippine sceneries. This eventually led to National Bookstore's appointment as the Philippine licensee for Hallmark Cards. Soon other publication programs followed suit, working in conjunction with various international publishers. National Bookstore has successfully acquired permits to reprint academic books on cheaper newsprint, making them more affordable to the reading masses.

National Bookstore's expansion was prompted by its widening market and steadily growing product lines. The Ramos couple had managed to construct a nine-story building which stood as a firm testament to National Bookstore's unrelenting growth. A namesake of the couple's three children, the Albecer Building (from Afredo, Benjamin, & Cecilia), was the first spawn of the vast chain of National Bookstores in existence today. The distinctive red and white stripes are now staples in major commercial districts in key cities all over the Philippines, providing the widest selection of professional and educational products-affordable and readily available to the buying public.

But at the heart of National Bookstore is its firm advocacy towards education and literacy. In an effort to improve the diminishing faculties of education here in the country, National Bookstore's flagship project "Buklat Aklat" was established. Through the use of mobile libraries, public schools in far-flung locales were able to enjoy the benefits of books and other vital educational materials that were previously unavailable to students. The success of the project led to the founding of the National Bookstore Foundation Inc.(NBSFI), a non-profit organization devoted to the promotion of literacy and education through reading. The same goal is prevalent in the foundation's latest effort. The "Handog Ko, Aklat Mo" is a book raising campaign participated in by all National Bookstore branches during the Christmas season. By encouraging patrons to purchase books as donations, different public schools are then supplied with vital reading materials to start up their own libraries.

National Bookstore, born from its modest beginnings, has truly become the industry giant we've known and loved. Its 65 years of existence has transcended many generations of turmoil and joy-and now looking forward to the next 65 years of life stories.

ADVT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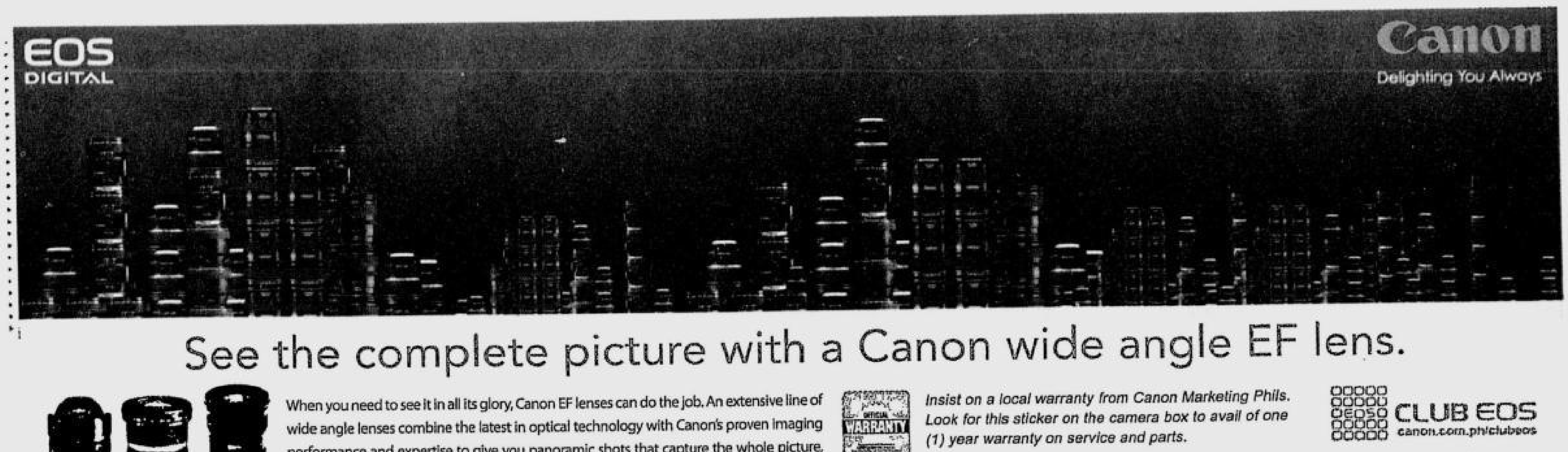

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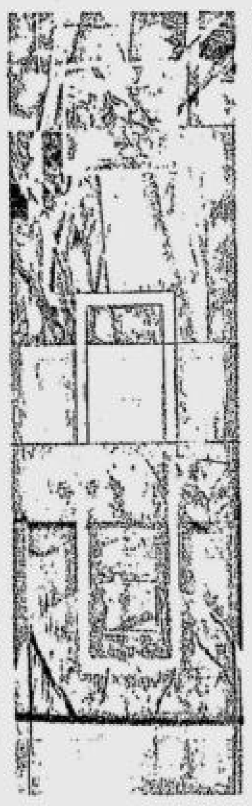
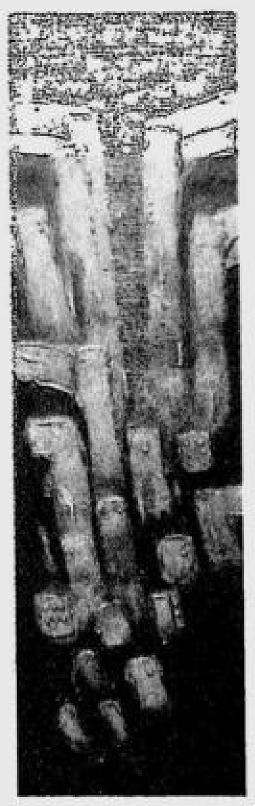
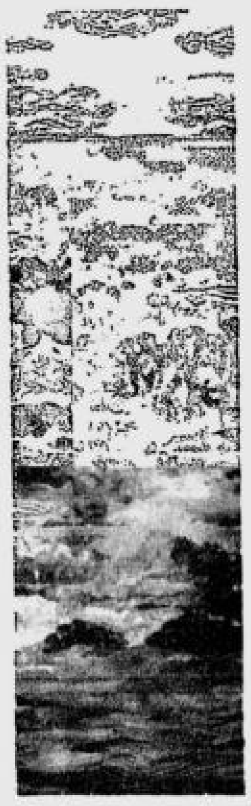
Dreo, Offemaria, and Sebastian in one show



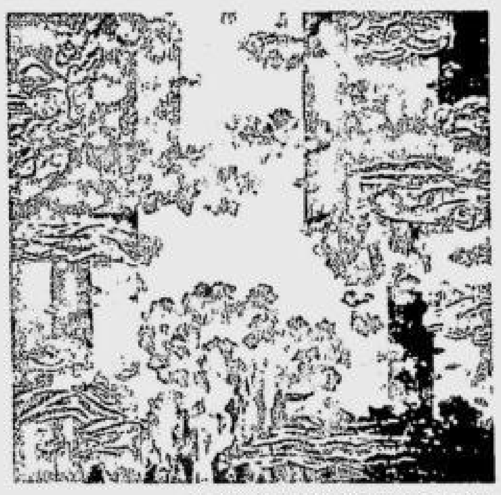
"TREES," by Norman Dreo

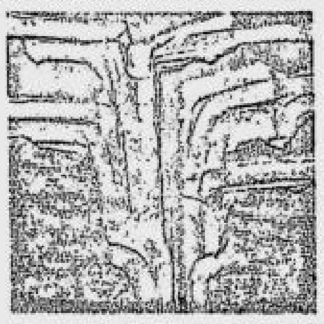


"NEW Beginnings," by Wilfredo Offemaria



"BLESSED by the Sun," by Aner Sebastian





DREO'S "Trees" series (above) and Offemaria's "Autumn"

Art troika in 'Earth Essentials'

"EARTH ESSENTIALS" IS ON VIEW at 1/of Gallery (2/L Serendra, Bonifacio Global City). Running until May 20, the exhibit features the works of Norman Dreo, Wilfredo Offemaria, and Aner Sebastian.

Each painter has always explored nature in all its beauty, power and bounty.

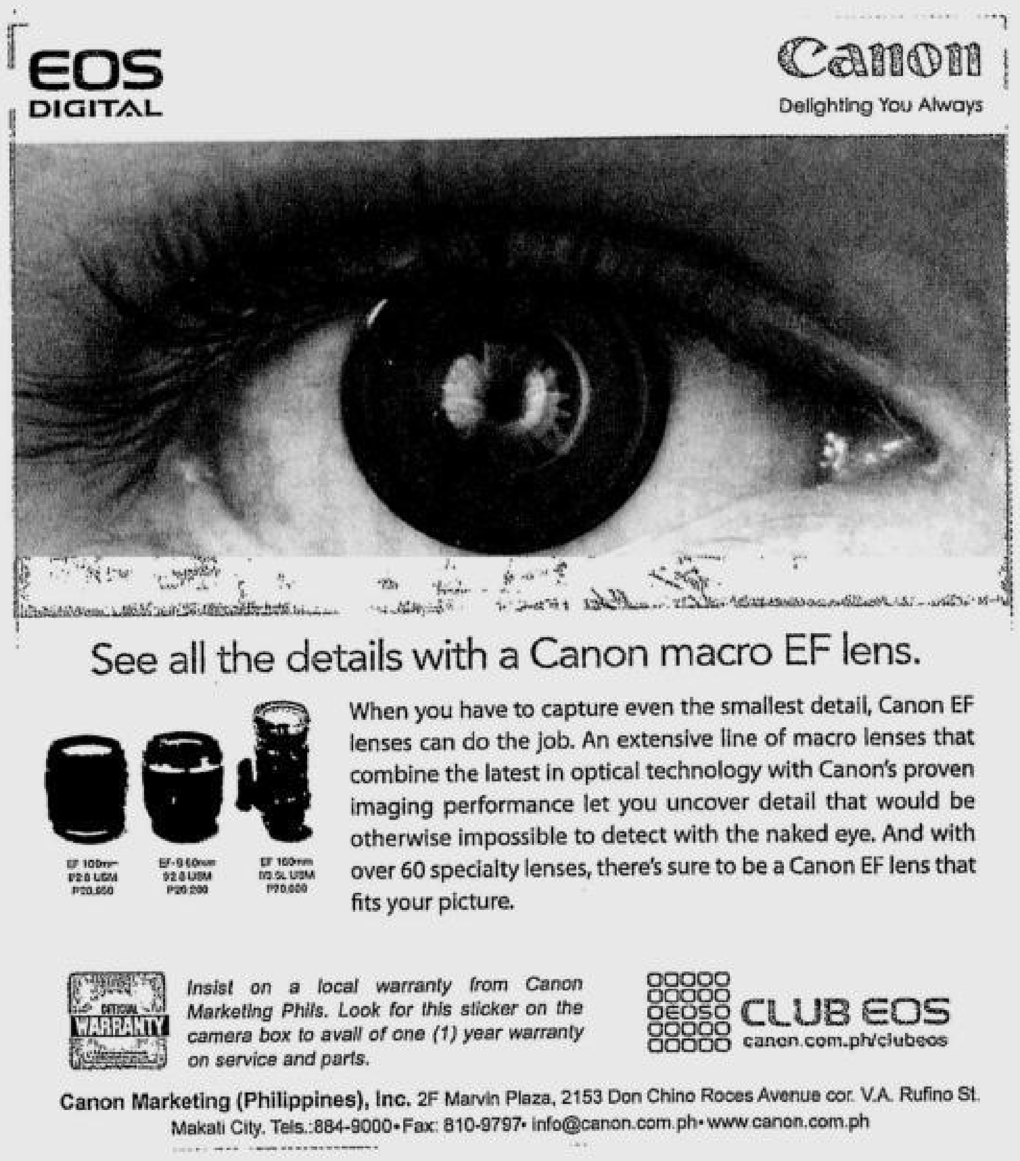
Dreo's marked interest in scenes alive with autumnal crispness began during his European sojourn a few years ago, when he was inspired by the bright countryside foliage.

Lately Offemaria has been evoking through his textured abstracts the majestic interactions of the elements.

Sebastian, meanwhile, has made very vivid visual exhortations against forest degradation.

In "Earth Essentials," Dreo's trees surprise with bright hues. Sebastian accentuates his images with texture Offemaria displays the strength of the spontaneous stroke.

Call 901-3152 for more datails.



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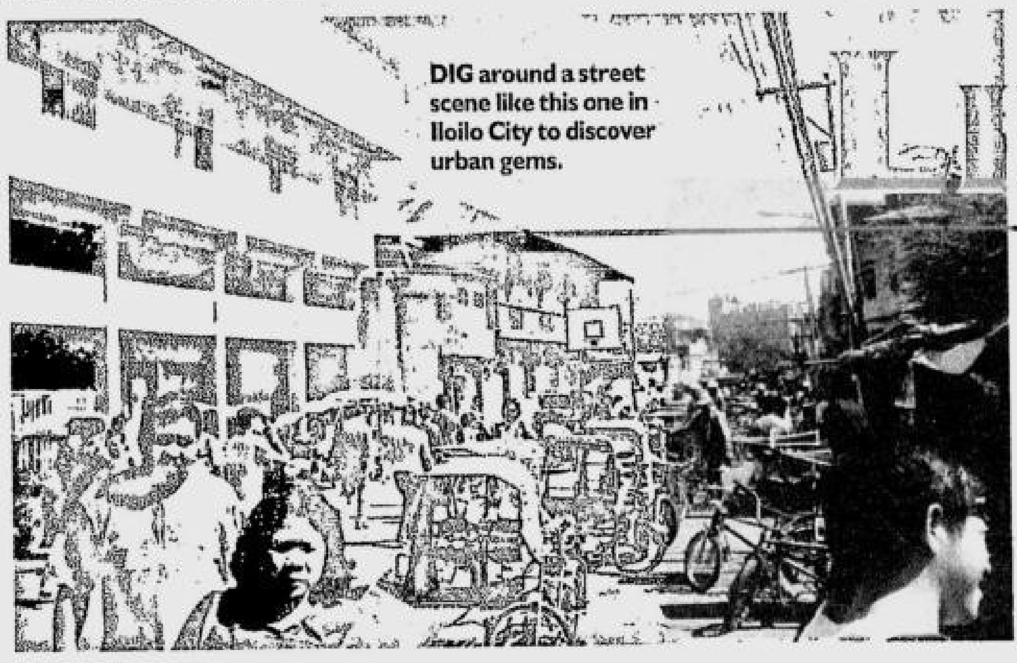

DIG around a street scene like this one in Iloilo City to discover urban gems.

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto Villalon

It's not what it seems

WE TREAT OUR SURROUNDINGS pretty cavalierly, either complaining about the urban blight or simply ignoring all of that ugly city junk altogether. Just the short drive from the airport to Manila says it all—traffic, pollution, congestion, clogged *esteros*, poverty, street children, illegal settlers.

It really is not the best introduction to the Philippines, we think with much embarrassment, for first-time visitors to Manila, especially foreigners. But think again, it is the best introduction there could be, it really tells you what Manila is all about.

The scene is a visual statement of the urban chaos that is Manila today, but it is a scene not confined only to the nation's capital. It is common to all other Philippine cities, having become the unofficial norm for how a Philippine city ends up looking, regardless of whatever urban-planning exercises or heritage and tourism attractions the city spins through the media for public consumption.

Thirty years ago, the redoubtable Imelda had a solution. Put our best foot forward, she ordered. Plant a screen of white picket fences right at the edge of the street. Hide the objectionable. Sanitize the view.

Sanitize? What is there to sanitize? We should be honest and let it all hang out.

I would look at the scene as a tapestry that reveals so much about Philippine lifestyle today. Surveying the scene peels away layers of Filipino lifestyles past.

It uncovers layers of structures, plazas, former rice fields and agricultural areas that have been built, remodeled, refurbished, demolished, rebuilt, overbuilt and abandoned over generations, a record of the many changes that have passed to get us to this point in our (under-) development.

Dig around our cities to find hidden treasures as you would in Divisoria or any flea market to uncover finds. Peel away layers of scar tissues and disfigurement to discover urban gems. It's an experience that may be uncomfortable at first, but it never disappoints.

Ilonggos walk visitors around their city center, proudly showing off the heritage business district. The buildings from the 1920s have filigree-embellished façades. Those from the 1930s are in a vigorous Art Deco style. Still later structures are in 1950s Modern.

Ilonggo pride for this part of the city is justified. It probably is one of the most extensive

IT'S NOT/ D2

Pinay soprano cast in 'Turandot' in Vienna

RACHELLE Gerodias in last year's "Eugene Onegin".

Europe-based Filipino tenor Otoniel Gonzaga to play Calaf

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

AN OPERA COUP IN THE VIENNA Volksoper: Manila-based Filipina soprano Rachelle Gerodias has been cast in the leading role of Liu for the 2008 production of Puccini's "Turandot." The late Renata Tebaldi, who was often pitted against Maria Callas, had played the role during her heyday.

Meanwhile, for the same production, Otoniel Gonzaga will sing Calaf, a role which the internationally renowned Filipino tenor had played before in an opera production in Anchorage, Alaska.

It was Gonzaga who had arranged for Gerodias to audition for the role. He had insisted to the theater management that they hear Gerodias.

Gonzaga told the INQUIRER: "It is my dream to have more Filipino singers in

PINAY/ D2

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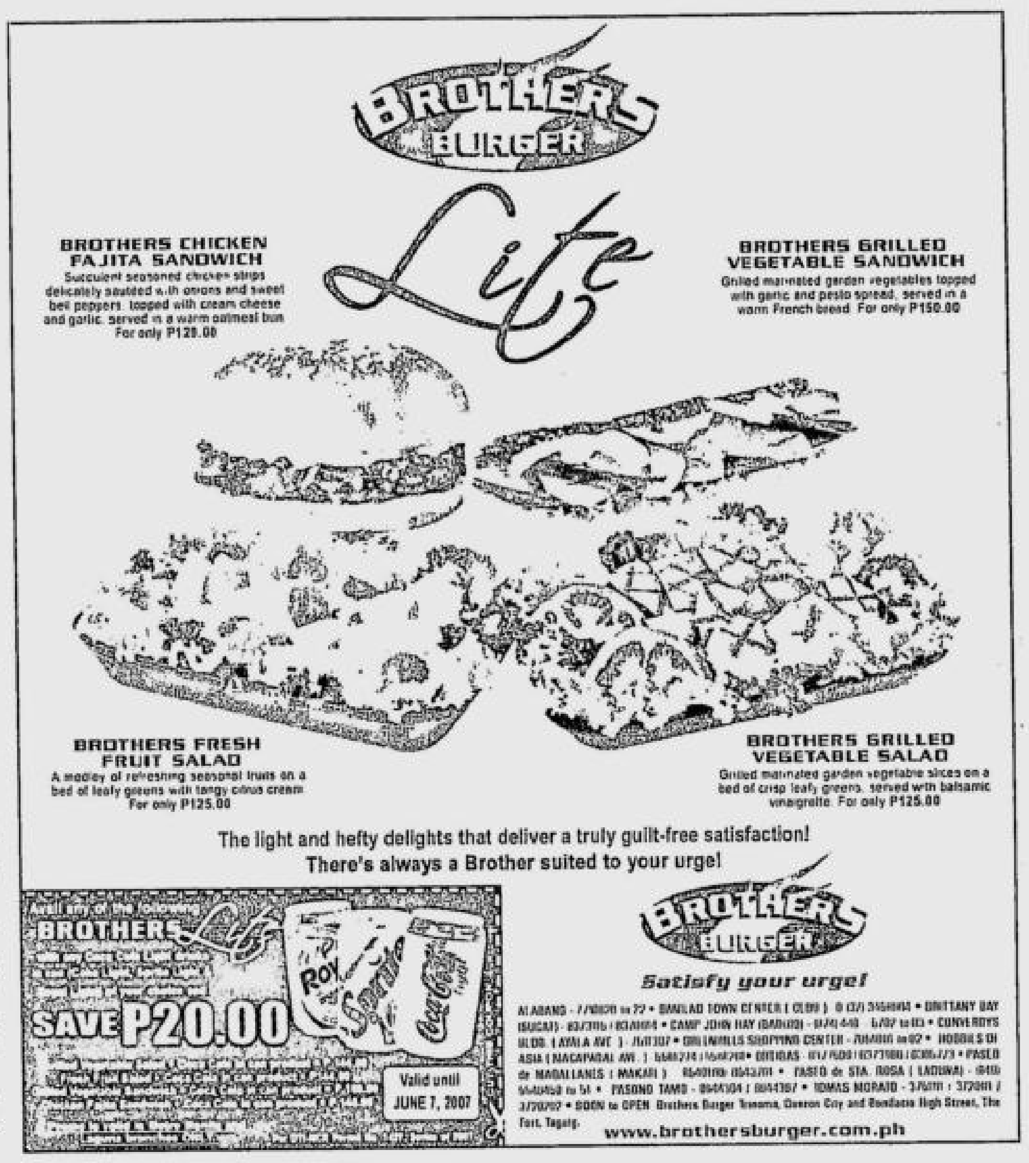

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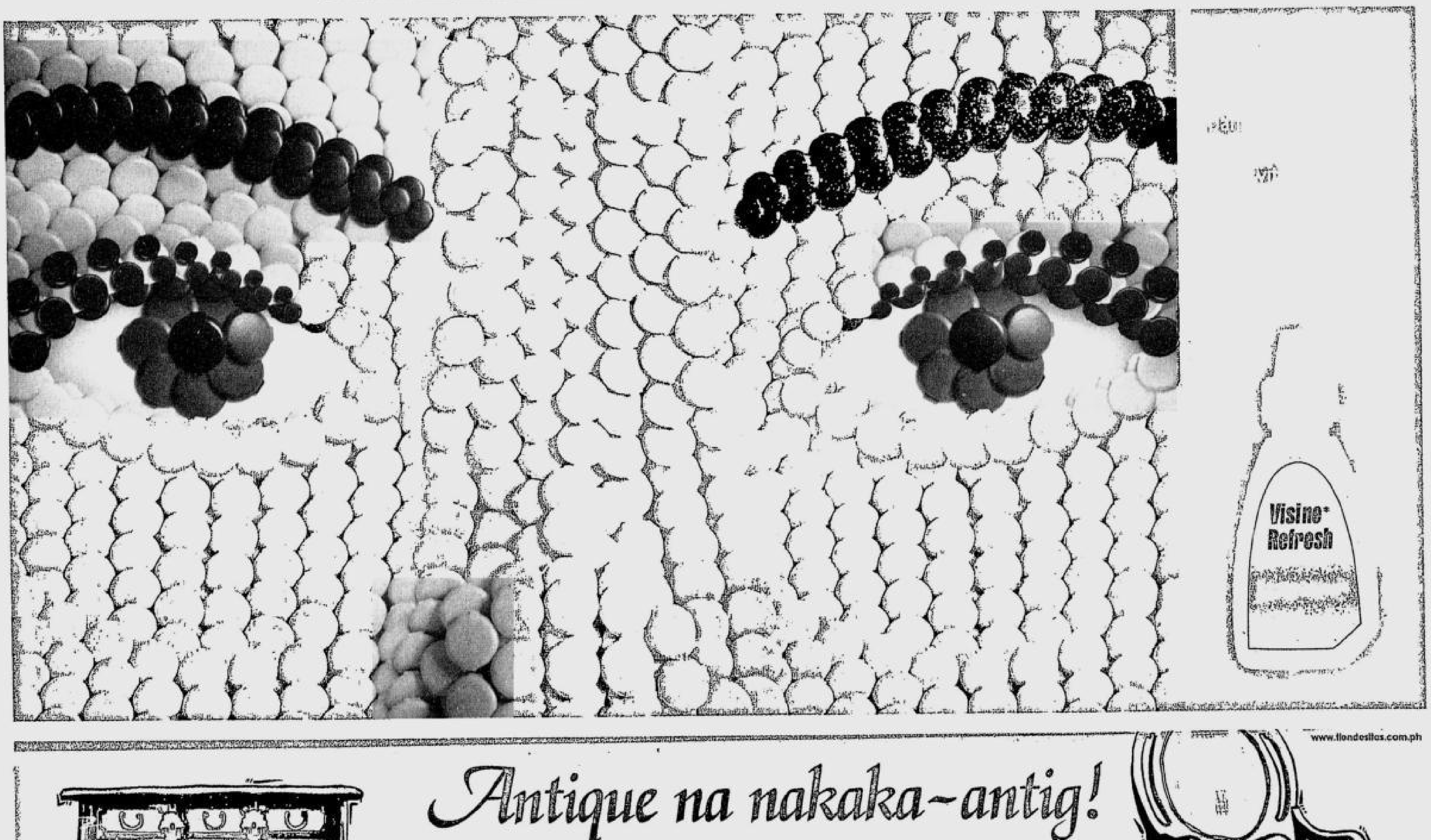

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KUZNETSOV with well-wishers like Susan Macuja, who speaks Russian, and Tessie Ojeda-Luz

ACTOR Cesar Montano with flutist Jay Gomez, pianist Jonathan Coo and soprano Nenen Espina in the actor's Bulacan residence

Pinay soprano cast in 'Turandot'

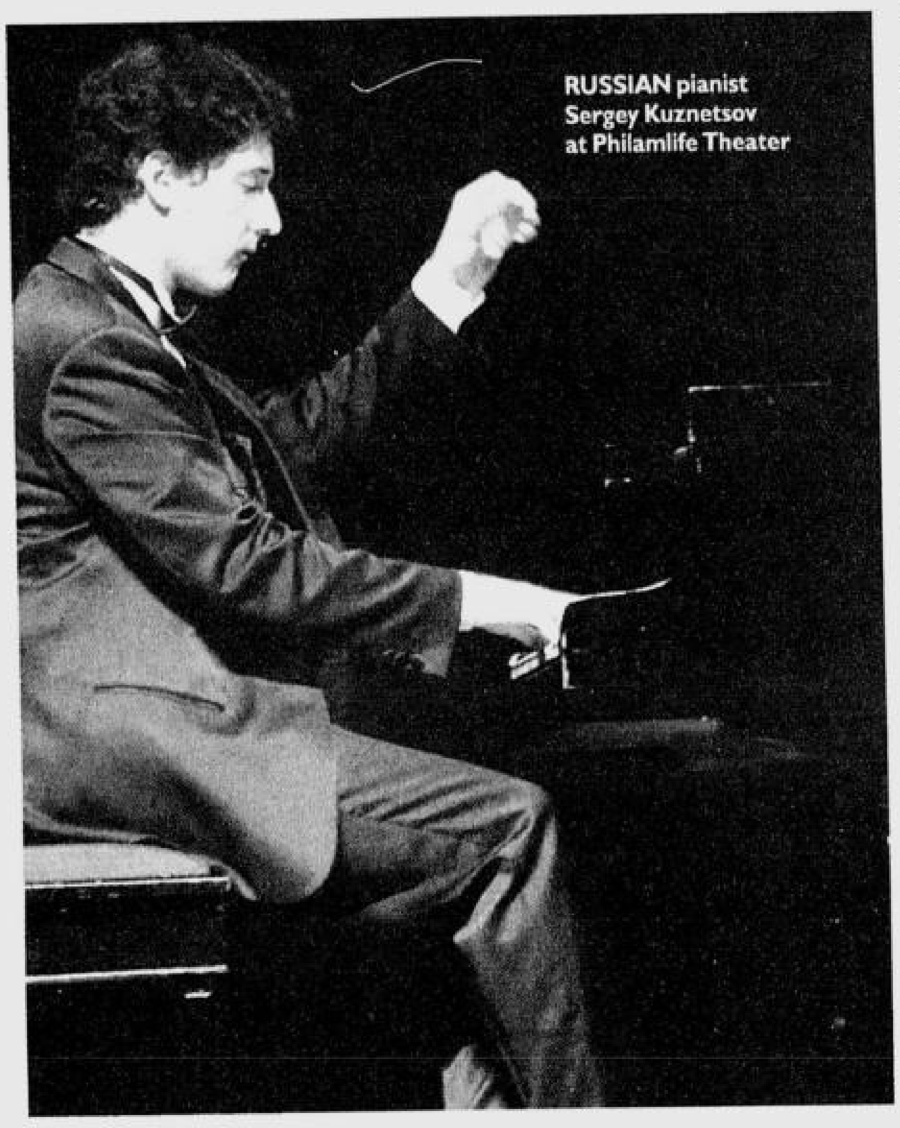
From page D1

Europe in general and in Vienna in particular in the very near future. I need the help of the government to achieve this goal, and I need to do it while I am still active in this field."

Earlier this year, Gonzaga received the Presidential Order of Merit for outstanding achievement in music from President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Arts-friendly politicians

After today's elections, will the new batch of mayors and governors take a second look at the arts and finally see their important role in a dynamic society?



RUSSIAN pianist Sergey Kuznetsov at Philamlife Theater

Will the new batch of representatives and senators find time to enact laws that will:

1. Bring music and the arts back in the school curriculum;
2. Make both local and national government sponsor outreach concerts and provide support for promising but poor artists when they go abroad for further studies;
3. Require leading private and public corporations to sponsor class-A concerts by subsidizing air tickets of artists and/or buying tickets for those who cannot afford to watch them. Perhaps they should further require leading companies to set aside a percentage of their profits to help fund young artists.

Some politicians have a track record of assisting culture and the arts.

Nueva Ecija Governor Tomas Joson III and Mayor Nestor Alvarez of the Science City of Muñoz in Nueva Ecija are very arts-friendly.

They bring the best artists to perform in the province. They also give the arts a chance to be appreciated not just by the middle and upper classes but also by farmers and other small people.

I know many voters are leery about actors figuring in public service.

But actor-director Cesar Montano's achievements speak for themselves. He's running for the Senate, and he promises to enact laws that will help improve the quality of Filipino movies.

Senate candidate Loren Legarda is also close to artists, always asking them to submit recommendations on what legislation she could help pass that would alleviate the arts and the artists.

Russian pianist gets raves

The Philippine debut of Russian Sergey Kuznetsov had local music aficionados praising the pianist to high heavens.

The acclaim was surprising since the pianist did not have a popular program and his repertoire used the power of silence in between the notes. Music lovers screamed bravo after a slow and quiet piece called "Meditation" by Tchaikovsky.

Painter Ivi Cosio said Kuznetsov's "Gaspard de la nuit" (by Ravel) was "absolutely magical," and critic Tony Hila praised the pianist's dynamics and solid tones.

Music lover Mely Agabin said the concert was superb. "He is so expressive even if he is young-looking."

In Bacolod, audiences at L'Fisher Hotel Ballroom raved about the pianist's thunderous chords and said he had won a new generation over to classical music.

"My wife was 're-cultured' by that performance," said Tony Boot of Talisay City. "Every time I play the piano at home, she smirks at me saying I can never hope to be another Kuznetsov."

Boot came from the same town where pianist Leonor Kilayko was born.

Series continues

After the well-received Philippine debut of Kuznetsov, the Great Performance Series resumes on Aug. 18 with the recital of distinguished Filipino baritone Andrew Fernando, accompanied by pianist Mary Anne Espina.

Fernando is the first Filipino singer to win the Loren L. Zachary National Voice Competition in the United States. He was also grand-prize winner of the Pasadena Opera Guild Vocal Competition.

Fernando and Espina will be heard in Bacolod City Sept. 6 at L'Fisher Hotel Ballroom.

For tickets and early buyer discount, call (02) 9007023, (02)4972971, or 0906-5104270.

Photo exhibit on great colonial bridges

IN CONNECTION WITH THE National Heritage Festival this May, postage stamps showing Philippine bridges will be launched together with a photographic exhibit of 22 Hispanic colonial bridges on May 16, 6 p.m., at the Upper Level of Glorietta, Ayala Center, Makati. The exhibit will run until May 23.

The exhibit is based on the research of architect and architectural historian Miguel Noche of the University of Santo Tomas College of Architecture.

Civil engineers began to be sent by Spain to Islas Filipinas when the Inspeccion General de Obras Publicas was created in 1866.

By that time, however, many bridges had already been built by the powerful missionary orders. Supervised by their friar-designers, most of them were put together using the polo system, in which Filipinos were asked to render civic work. Like the churches constructed in each town, hewn rock was held together with a lime mixture.

Some of these still stand, engineering marvels of Filipinos and the Spanish friars. The Puente de Dampol through treacherous Dalton Pass in Nueva Vizcaya, in the town of Dupax de Sur, remains intact and in use. Built by Fray Francisco Rocamora of the Dominican Order in 1818, the single-arch bridge spans Abanatan Creek.

Fray Victorino del Moral de Calatrava supervised the erection of Puente del Capricho in 1826. Built over Olla River in Majayjay, Laguna, the 90-ft high arch used the Mamposteria technique—one rough stone piled on top of another, and held together with lime.

Though unfurbished, it has withstood earthquakes, despite the *fraile*'s inexperience in engineering. The awesome structure was used by Francis Ford Coppola as a location for "Apocalypse Now."

Prevailed upon by friars, Spanish dons built bridges in Tayabas, Quezon. Puente de Alitao, traversing Alitao River and still in use, was built in 1823 by Don Diego Urbano.

Far grander in scale is Puente de Malagonlong, five towering arches spanning Dumcan River. Don Julian Francisco built it in 1850.

The festival is sponsored by National Commission on Culture and the Arts and the Department of Tourism. The exhibit is organized by the Philippine Postal Corp., UST Center for Intercultural Studies and the Ayala Malls.

It's not what it seems

From page D1

heritage business districts in the Philippines.

Around the fringes of the heritage business district are ordinary commercial buildings with grimy machine shops, hardware, wholesalers on sidewalk level. Once in a fortunate while you get a peek behind the layer of shophouses to see a surprise view of an Iloilo mansion, its grandeur diminished. However, a few are still inhabited, some subdivided into rental units, and many simply abandoned.

In all Philippine cities, what you see is not necessarily what you get.

Dig into Cebu City. Touted as the sun and sea capital of the Philippines, the place for handicraft and shell jewelry, and home to Magellan's Cross and Santo Niño Shrine.

In the three-block radius from those two tourist "destinations" is an even richer, totally unknown destination. Streets of pre-World War II buildings and warehouses stand forgotten along the streets radiating from Magellan's Cross.

A wonderful row of arcaded warehouses along the street leading from the City Hall to the former Customs House (now Malacañang of the South) has been demolished, leaving an open gap in the area's vigorous sidewalk life.

The street life is outstanding. Everything happens on the sidewalk. People and hawkers crowd the area. Shops selling every imaginable Cebuano-made bead in creation line a narrow side street.

All this happens within an urban locale considered too "ordinary" for visitors. But it is within these ordinary surroundings that Cebu pulses, not in the shiny malls and gentrified restaurant strips in other parts of the city.

There is so much more to Cebu not written about in guide books.

Little Plaza Ferguson in Manila's Ermita district, once a grand seaside plaza opening out to Dewey (Roxas) Boulevard and with Ermita Church defining its opposite boundary, is now overrun with double-parked vehicles, greasy spoons, and broken sidewalks.

On the grass plot at the plaza center stands a memorial to an illustrious member of the Guerrero family, one of the few original Ermita families, whose contributions to Philippine medicine, literature, religion, jurisprudence and diplomacy are outstanding.

> In all Philippine cities, what you see is not necessarily what you get

The Guerrero family, although remarkable, is only one small facet of the incredible Ermita history.

Little pockets of Ermita history still exist in the area. Above the gaggle of souvenir shops, money-changers and employment recruiters stand some outstanding structures that speak of bygone days in what was once probably the most elite of Manila districts.

Ermita houses are gone, replaced by commercial structures and medium-rise buildings. But take a step back and marvel at some of the surviving but highly endangered pre-World War II Art Deco apartment buildings. There are some interesting post-World War II buildings from the 1950s as well, all with large windows and high ceilings required during the pre-air-conditioning days, many still with magnificent views of Manila Bay.

Our cities really have personalities of their own, and should be judged by local standards—that is, by applying the serendipity principle of peeling off layers of urban decay to find a few hidden jewels here and there. How long those jewels will remain there, nobody can tell.

Nor can anybody tell how many more layers of urban decay our fellow urban dwellers will throw over what is there today.

We could say that our cities, like all other cities in the world, are works in progress.

Heritage watch

Minerva Franco, executive director of Design Center Philippines for the past 30 years, passed away a few weeks ago. Menchie, a resolutely private person, characteristically asked for no wake, no eulogies and no fuss.

Menchie was part of a band of young graduates who saw great promise in Philippine design and the brilliant, unappreciated heritage of traditional decorative arts in the Philippines and its international potential in the hands of Filipino designers.

With that vision, we set out to change our country, improve the lot of our people, generate employment, revive our vanishing traditions, establish an industrial-design profession, and produce products proudly of Philippine origin for ourselves and for the foreign market that are absolute global standouts.

Our little band eventually moved away from Design Center to pursue other endeavors. Menchie remained to achieve our shared vision, bringing up the baby we entrusted to her into a strapping, self-confident, and successful adult, who, as she would insist, is so painfully low-key about having revolutionized the industrial design and export industries in this country.

Menchie brought up our baby well. She will always have our gratitude for what she has done.

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Spanish cultural grant program now accepting applications

INSTITUTO CERVANTES ANNOUNCES THAT the deadline for applications to the Spanish Program for Cultural Cooperation (SPCC) grants is on May 29.

The program awards financial support to projects initiated by scholars and individuals who study and promote the shared heritage of the Philippines and Spain.

The Ministry of Culture of Spain designed the SPCC to foster closer ties between Spain, the Philippines, and the former Spanish territories in the Pacific islands through collaborative works of scholars in the humanities and the social sciences, with the cooperation of universities in the Philippines and the Pacific islands.

To learn the application rules, visit www.spcc.ph. You may also e-mail spcc@cervantes.net.ph. Or call 5261482-85 loc 110.

There are four types of grants: Research; Publication Projects; Cultural Activities; and Conferences, Symposia and Seminars.

Accomplish at least two forms: the curriculum vitae form and the grant form.

The grant form asks for the objectives and significance of the proposed projects as well as the timeline and the budget of the projects.

Applications may be submitted to Instituto Cervantes (855 T.M. Kalaw St., Ermita, Manila); or e-mailed to Carlos Madrid, academic coordinator of the program.

'Party List,' 'telenobela' and 'miskol'

EIGHT WORDS MADE IT TO THE INITIAL list of nominees to the Sawikaan 2007: Pambansang Kumperensiya sa Salita ng Taon, a project of the Filipinas Institute of Translation (FIT). The project is funded by the National Commission on Culture and the Arts and Blas Ople Foundation.

Party list, *telenobela*, and *miskol* are chosen because of their impact on the national consciousness and on the political and social life of Filipinos recently.

The other words that have acquired a certain degree of social significance include *videoke*, *extra-judicial killing*, *make over*, *friendster*, and *roro*. *Roro* is short for roll on-roll off or the inter-island, cross-country transport system designed to spur national progress.

Over 50 words were submitted for consideration but only the eight met the criteria set by the FIT executive board.

The proponents of the nominee words will read their papers in the Sawikaan 2007 conference on August 2-3 at Pulungang Recto, Bulwagang Rizal, College of Arts and Letters, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City.

Scholars Florentino Hornedo and Ruth Elynia Mabanglo will be the main speakers. The conference is open to any parties interested in language and social change. Contact Eilene Narvaez (9244747) or Romulo P. Baquiran Jr. (9221830).

BULACAN SCHOOL REUNION The Holy Spirit Academy of Malolos (HSAM), formerly Immaculata Academy of Malolos, will hold its 70th alumni homecoming on May 19, 2 p.m. at the HSAM Campus, Sta. Isabel, Malolos, Bulacan. Organizers are the Silver Jubilarians HS'82 GS'78. All graduates can contact Jo at 0918-9269637 or Dodi at 0917-8866319. In photo are members of the reunion's organizing committee.

We'll tell you a story on why the first instant misua from Nissin doesn't taste like instant because we need more than a paragraph to explain to you that we didn't create it instantly.

It all started in 1910, when Momofuko Ando, the inventor of instant ramen and the founder of Nissin was born. Orphaned as a child and sternly raised by his grandfather, Mr. Ando transacted business as a give-and-take affair; that is, if you take too much and give too little in return, you end up killing the other person and losing everything.

Nissin was founded on this win-win principle.

Hunger brought out the inspiration.

In the spring of 1958, post-war Osaka had been reduced to ashes. There was little to eat; food lines stretched around dark street corners. It was here that Mr. Ando saw people dazed with hunger, on their feet for hours, all for a bowl of steaming ramen. In two years' time, he created and distributed the first instant ramen from his backyard.

What started out as neighborhood fare ended up as one of the world's favorite meals for hungry people who can't wait.

From then on, Mr. Ando never stopped, inventing Nissin Cup Noodles in 1971 and other technological innovations in the instant food industry—the latest being the first Space Ramen in 2006.

Now the same Japanese spirit of innovation is being used to make the first instant misua from Nissin—a proudly Pinoy noodle—in Cup Noodle format.

Nissin has achieved a fusion of Pinoy taste and Japanese technology.

Distinctly Pinoy. Misua mismo.

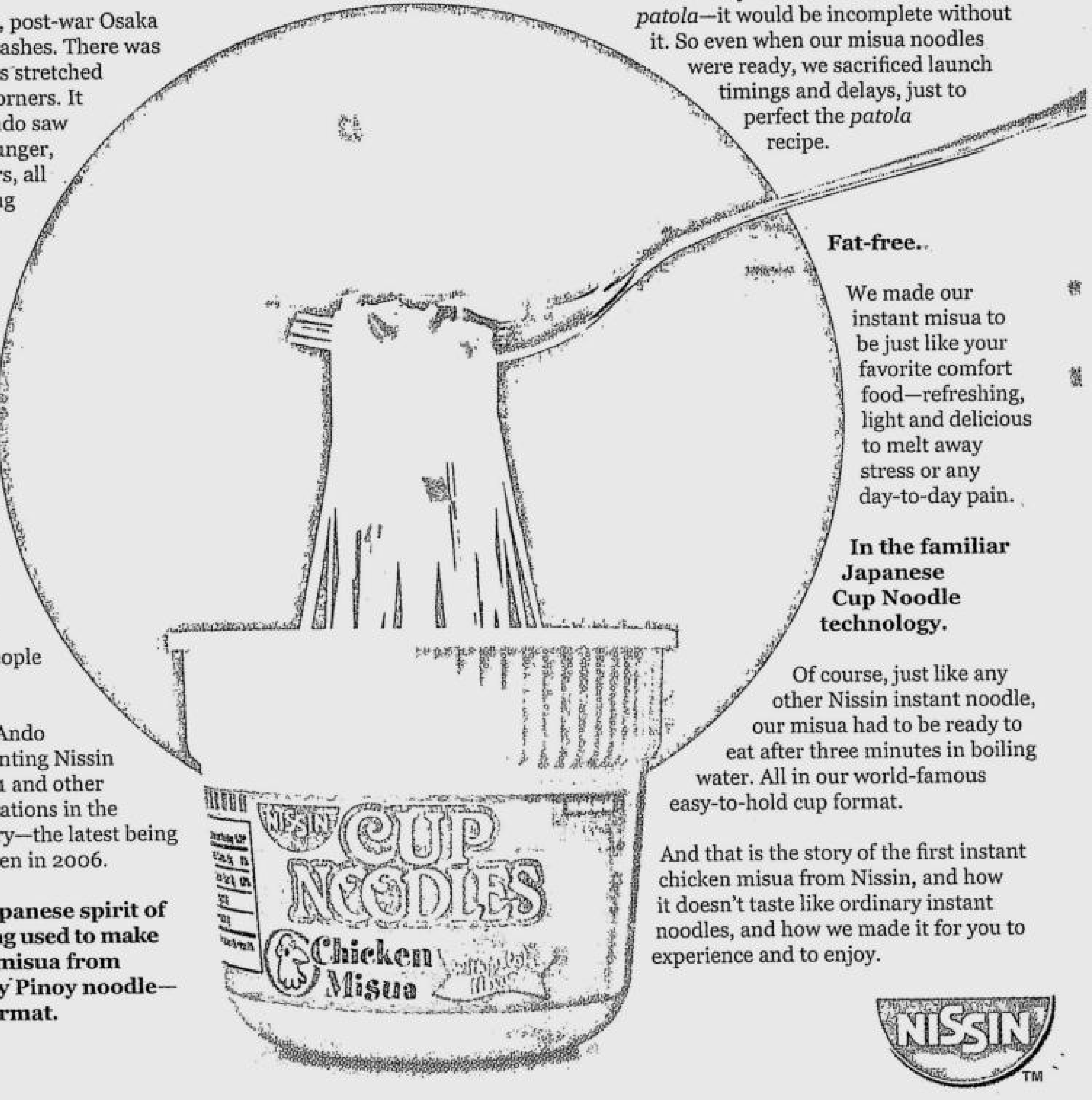
We searched the local countryside, going as far as Batangas for the perfect misua. We tried everything from roadside eateries to gourmet restaurants—anything to capture this classic Pinoy rice noodle. We were looking for the right texture, thickness, color and the clean translucency of true misua.

Chicken Misua for the soul.

Our mothers knew all along. There's nothing like chicken misua to calm a restless heart or to soothe an ailing soul. It has to be prepared with great love and care to be able to do this. That's why we didn't tamper much with the *sinaunang patola* and chicken mix.

Enhanced by *patola* flavor.

The traditional misua our mothers made always had *patola*—it would be incomplete without it. So even when our misua noodles were ready, we sacrificed launch timings and delays, just to perfect the *patola* recipe.



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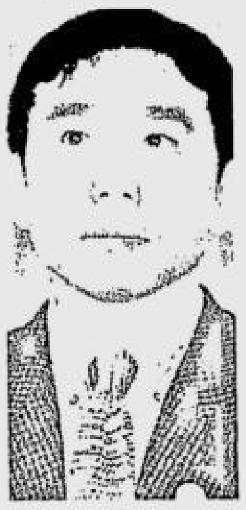
Focus on fictionist Murakami

HARUKI MURAKAMI WAS BORN IN Kyoto in January 1949 but spent most of his youth in Kobe. His father was the son of a Buddhist priest, his mother was the daughter of an Osaka merchant, and both were teachers of Japanese literature.

Since childhood, Murakami has been heavily influenced by Western culture, particularly Western music and literature. He grew up reading everything from the works of American writers such as Kurt Vonnegut and Richard Brautigan, and is often distinguished from other Japanese writers for his Western influences.


MURAKAMI

This influence is heavily present in his writing even today, observed in its Westernized style, idiosyncratic humor, and poignant nostalgia.

He wrote his first novel, "Hear the Wind Song" (1979), at age 29 and sent it to the Gunzou literature contest where it won the first prize.

Murakami achieved a major breakthrough and national recognition in 1987 with the publication of "Norwegian Wood," a nostalgic story of loss and sexuality. It sold millions of copies among Japanese youths, making Murakami something of a superstar in his native country, to his dismay.

In 1995, he published "The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle," a novel that fuses his realistic and fantastic tendencies. It is also more socially conscious than his previous work, dealing in part with the difficult topic of war crimes in Manchuria.

The novel is frequently cited by critics as Murakami's best work. It won him the Yomiuri Prize, awarded to him by one of his harshest former critics, Kenzaburo Oe, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1994. In 2006, he received the Franz Kafka Prize for his critically acclaimed novel "Kafka on the Shore" (2002).

Murakami's fiction, though often criticized for being "pop" literature by Japan's literary establishment, is surreal, humorous and reflects an essential alienation, loneliness and longing for love in a way that has touched readers worldwide.

Murakami's novels are available at PowerBooks Specialty Store, which has branches at Greenbelt 4 (757-6428 to 29); Megamall (635-2898 to 99), Alabang Town Center (850-5662 to 63); Glorietta 3 (752-7075); Shangri-La (638-0023/25); Robinson's Place Ermita (523-3334/ 524-3448); Mall of Asia (556-0244); and Festival Supermall (850-8221).

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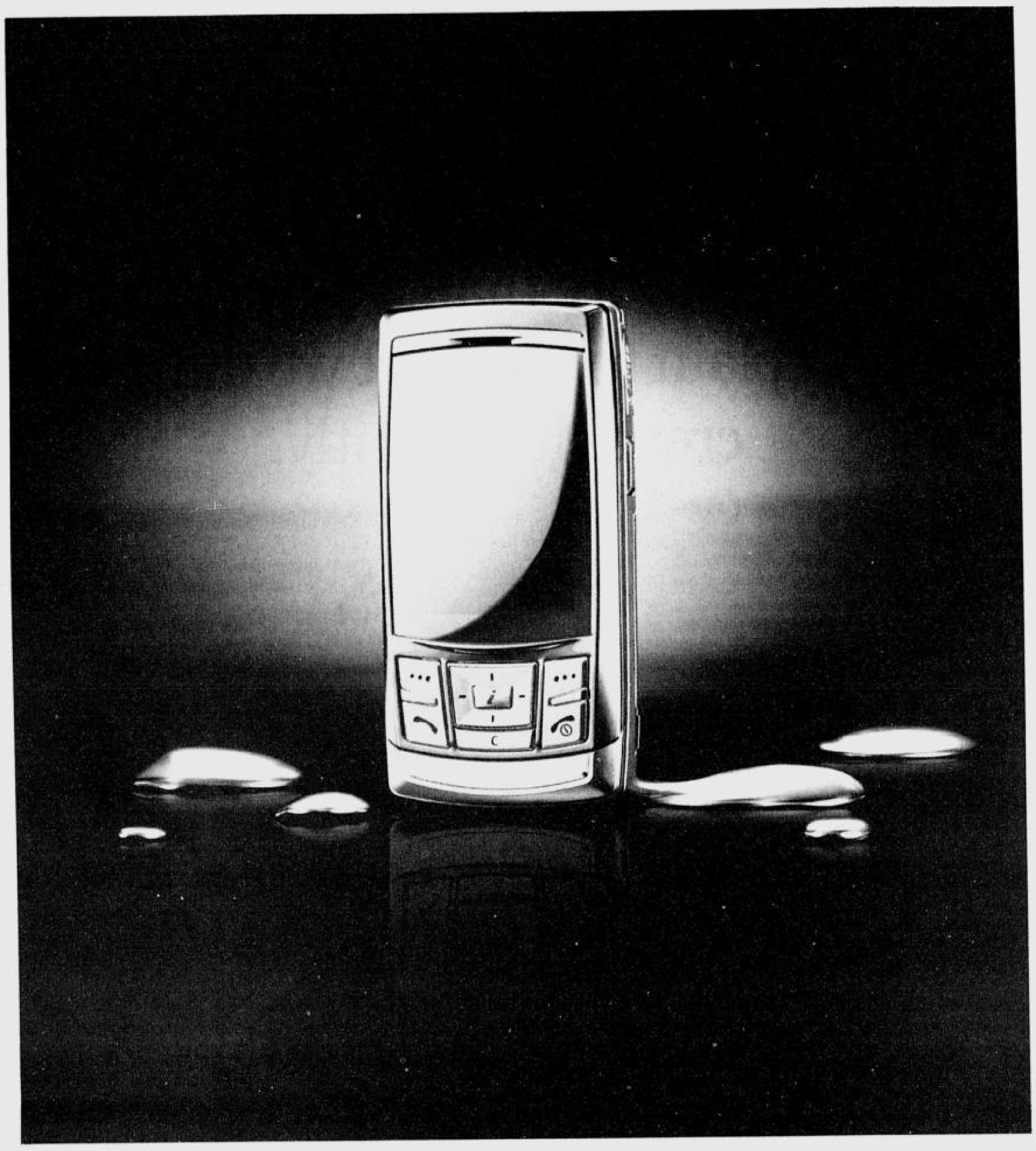

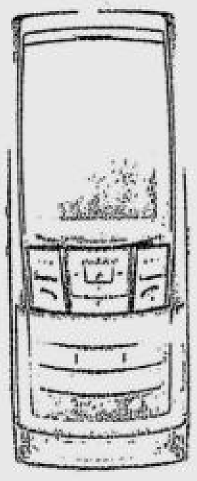

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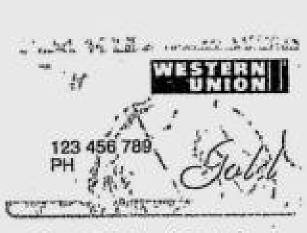

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Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**
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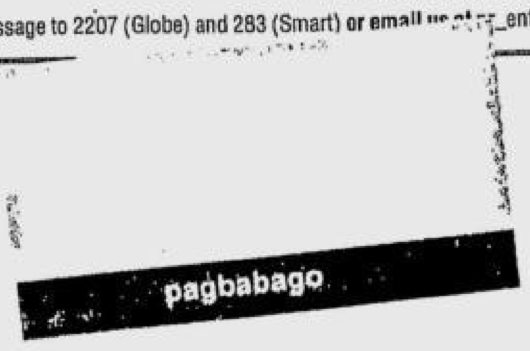
Songs for this day recorded in 2002

REVIEW



By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

IN 2001, THE CIVIL SOCIETY movement pagbabago@pilipinas sought to use music in its campaign to make this country a better place. One of its objectives was to inspire inner change so that Filipinos might learn, for example, to discern who to vote for during elections.

It's been almost five years since the album "Pagbabago" was recorded. It's hard to determine the level of awareness it has attained so far, being an independent release—which means no major record label funded its promotion—unless you're one of the fortunate few thousands who have a copy of the CD.

Today being Election Day, it's good to look back and understand what "Pagbabago" is all about.

Talents for free

Eight of the 12 tracks were co-written by Trina Belamide, also the producer. Better-known as a pop songwriter, Belamide worked closely with former INQUIRER reporter JP Fenix, hooking up with musicians who didn't take much prodding into joining the project without charging professional fees.

The album opens with "Ako Na," a slick dance cut featuring Regine Velasquez belting out mantra-like lyrics about responsibility:

SONGS/ E4

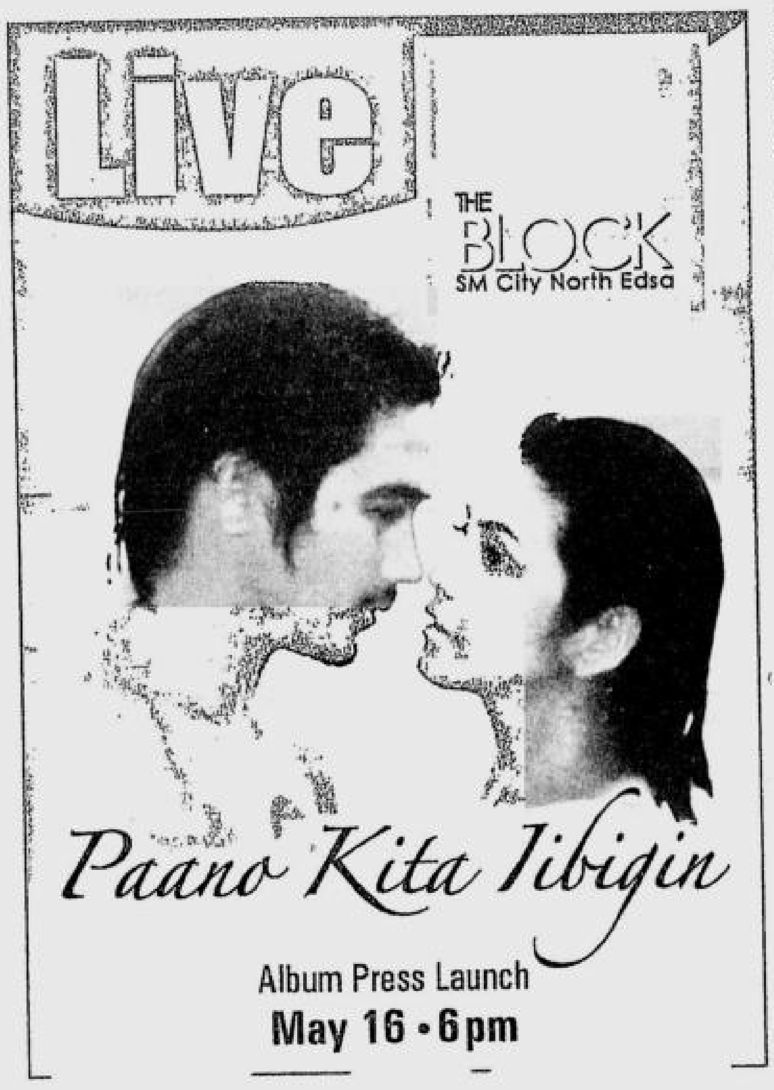
RP joins Toronto film mart

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL Committee (Iffcom), the agency that provides funding for movie producers invited to international film festivals, has been requested to attend the second Toronto film market in September, according to Iffcom chair Christine Dayrit.

The film market is a venue for producers to sell their films and interact with interna-

RP JOINS/ E2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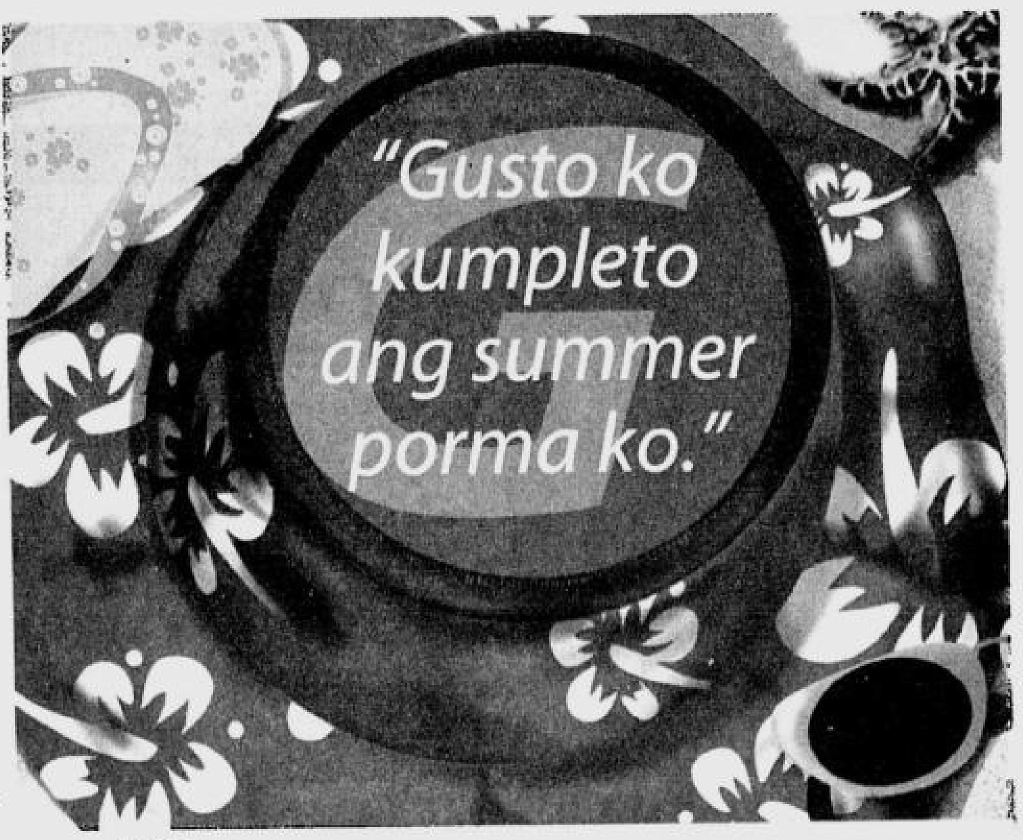

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sexythng	You Sexy Thing	Hot Chocolate		
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- 3 LUCKY YOU 12:00 2.30 5.00 7:30 10:00
- 4 THE CONDEMNED 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
- 5 28 WEEKS LATER 1:10 3.20 5:30 7:40 9.50
- 6 SPIDER-MAN 3 12:00 2:50 5:40 8:30
- 7 SPIDER-MAN 3 3:20 6:10 9:00
- 8 indieSine: MANORO 1:10 3:00 4:50 6:40 8:30
- 9 PERFECT STRANGER 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
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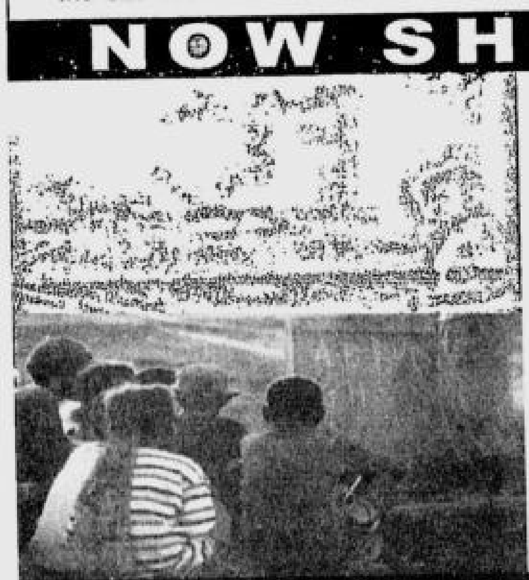

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- 4 THE CONDEMNED 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
- 5 28 WEEKS LATER 12:40 2.55 5:10 7:30 10:00
- 6 SPIDER-MAN 3 11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
- 7 SPIDER-MAN 3 12:45 3:30 6:15 9:00

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- 2 SPIDER-MAN 3 12:00 2:40 5:20 8:00
- 3 SPIDER-MAN 3 1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00
- 4 28 WEEKS LATER 11:25 1:50 4:15 6.40 9:05
- 5 THE CONDEMNED 1:20 3:55 6.30 9:05
- 6 SPIDER-MAN 3 1:40 4:20 7:00
- 7 SPIDER-MAN 3 11:00 1:40 4:50 7:00 9:30
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- 4 SPIDER-MAN 3
- 5 28 WEEKS LATER
- 6 THE CONDEMNED

PIONEER

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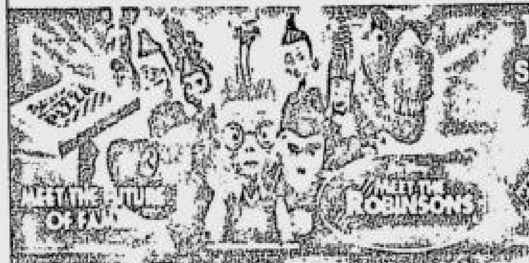
- 1 28 WEEKS LATER 12:50 3:30 6:10 8:50
- 2 SPIDER-MAN 3 12:50 3:30 6:10 8:50
- 3 THE CONDEMNED 1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40
- 4 LUCKY YOU 1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40



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28 WEEKS LATER
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SPIDER-MAN 3
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ANG CUTE NG INA MO
LUCKY YOU
28 WEEKS LATER
CONDEMNED

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
SPIDER-MAN 3
28 WEEKS LATER
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SPIDER-MAN 3
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SPIDER-MAN 3
LUCKY YOU
SPIDER-MAN 3
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SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
THE SHOOTER
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
CONDEMNED
28 WEEKS LATER
ANG CUTE NG INA MO
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
PAN'S LABYRINTH

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
SPIDER-MAN
SPIDER-MAN
SPIDER-MAN
SPIDER-MAN
SPIDER-MAN 3
ANG CUTE NG INA MO
28 WEEKS LATER
[illegible]
CONDEMNED
THE SHOOTER

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SPIDER-MAN
SPIDER-MAN
CONDEMNED
SPIDER-MAN
SPIDER-MAN

SM SOUTHMALL 806-8888
SPIDER-MAN 3
28 WEEKS LATER
SPIDER-MAN 3
CONDEMNED
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
LUCKY YOU
ANG CUTE NG INA MO

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SPIDER-MAN 3
CONDEMNED
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3

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CONDEMNED
LUCKY YOU
SPIDER-MAN 3
28 WEEKS LATER
SPIDER-MAN 3
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SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
ANG CUTE NG INA MO
[illegible]
THE SHOOTER

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323001-04
SPIDER-MAN 3
PREMONITION
THE SHOOTER
SPIDER-MAN 3

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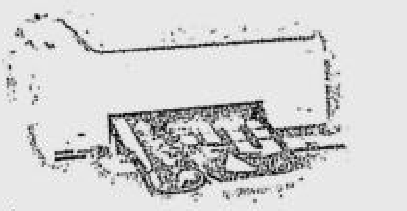
OPENS MAY 18



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SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
ANG CUTE NG INA MO
SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
GRAY MATTERS
THE SHOOTER
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SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
SUNSHINE
PREMONITION

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-89
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
THE SHOOTER
SPIDER-MAN 3
THE LAST MIMZY/ CARTOON NETWORK
ANG CUTE NG INA MO

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ANG CUTE NG INA MO
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
SUNSHINE

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SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
PREMONITION
THE REAPING

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SPIDER-MAN 3
THE SHOOTER
ROCKY BALBOA
SPIDER-MAN 3

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SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
LUCKY YOU
28 WEEKS LATER

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THE SHOOTER
PREMONITION
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3

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SPIDER-MAN 3
THE SHOOTER
PREMONITION
TURISTAS
SPIDER-MAN 3
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SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
MISS POTTER
THE REAPING

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
THE LAST MIMZY
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
THE SHOOTER
SPIDER-MAN 3
THE REAPING
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SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
PREMONITION
GRAY MATTERS
TURISTAS
THE SHOOTER
SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3

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SPIDER-MAN 3
SPIDER-MAN 3
PREMONITION
THE REAPING

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RP joins ...

From page E1

tional buyers and film experts.

Dayrit, also vice chair of the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP), said the invitation came from Cameron Bailey, programmer of the Toronto International Film Festival.

Impressed

"I think Bailey invited us after watching 'Foster Child,' which he liked very much," Dayrit told INQUIRER Entertainment. The Canadian expert was in Manila last week to shop for films that could be exhibited in TIFF, one of the biggest in the world.

"Foster Child," directed by the multi-awarded Brillante "Dante" Mendoza, is a film on the state of foster care in the country. It will be featured in the Director's Fortnight section of the prestigious Cannes International Film Festival this month.

Subsidy

Dayrit said the FDCP is subsidizing the cost of the trade booth at the Canadian fair.

"Bailey assured us that participating in the Toronto film market would not be as expensive as joining a similar event in France, for example," Dayrit pointed out. "This particular event targets countries with low-budgeted film outfits."

Meanwhile, Dayrit said the FDCP board convened on Wednesday to discuss the request of Seiko Films, producer of "Foster Child," for a P1-million subsidy for the movie's subtitling, printing and airfare for four delegates.

Exception

Dayrit said the board had agreed to give Seiko Films P800,000 as subsidy. The FDCP is allowed to shell out the maximum amount of P400,000.

"We find [P1 million] too much. But the board made an exception in this case because we are very pleased about going to Cannes," she said. "We hope to be part of the main competition next year."

Songs for ...

From page E4

Two other songs rendered by veteran acts sustain the sense of maturity that the album espouses. "Tanggapin Mo Kung Gusto Mo" by Apo is a bright calypso number that harps on free will; "Magbabago Ako" by The CompanY is the rousing ender that portrays enlightenment and positive action.

It's easy to view all this as just another righteous, if naïve call to unify a divided land through music. But it's not difficult to appreciate the motives of disconcerted individuals, who believe that while change doesn't happen overnight, it's an ideal worth pursuing in their lifetime.

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	28 WEEKS LATER	SPIDER-MAN 3	THE CONDEMNED	SPIDER-MAN 3			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	SPIDER-MAN 3	LUCKY YOU	THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	PERFECT STRANGERS	THE CONDEMNED	SPIDER-MAN 3	28 WEEKS LATER
GB1 GREENBELT 1	LUCKY YOU	SPIDER-MAN 3					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	28 WEEKS LATER GUARANTEED SEATS	LUCKY YOU GUARANTEED SEATS	SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX SPIDER-MAN 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	SPIDER-MAN 3	LUCKY YOU	THE CONDEMNED	28 WEEKS LATER		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	SPIDER-MAN 3	SPIDER-MAN 3		GRAY MATTERS			
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	SPIDER-MAN 3	LUCKY YOU	28 WEEKS LATER	THE CONDEMNED	SPIDER-MAN 3		

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Activity Center
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Ayala Center Cebu
Activity Center
June 1-3
1pm, 4pm & 6:30pm

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Songs for this day recorded in 2002

From page E1

"Ako na ang may kakayahan..." In between these phrases are spoken lines representing ordinary folk who want to stop whining and start helping solve problems. This may sound easier said than done, but it's obviously aimed at pricking the hearts of the cynical.

The second number, "Count on Me," has Jaya addressing a friend who had let her down—apparently alluding to dishonest leaders—leaving her with no option but to rely on herself. It's sad reality peering from behind the melodious trimmings of a ballad.

But the next track, "Eleksyon na Naman," has Grace Nono launching into a tirade against the circus that is Philippine polls. Backed by husband Bob Aves who also arranged her trademark ethno-world music sound, Nono delivers a strong performance.

Double-edged appeal is what the next four tracks possess. "Idol" sways on a reggae beat, but with Da Pulis and guest vocalist Anya Santos playfully describing sitcom images that shatter the myth behind every success of actors-turned politicians. "Kaduda-duda Ka" is classic videoke material, but with Renz Verano seriously expressing doubts on a candidate's sincerity. The music of "Hindi Mo Ako Mabibili" would sound good while splurging in Cowboy Grill, but with Aegis warning against vote-buying. And while "Walang Takip, Walang Tinatago" has a striptease-like tempo, what Mystica reveals in her singing is a dare to speak nothing but the truth.

Misplaced gratitude is tackled in "Owe U Nothin'," a bouncy R&B track featuring the talented Radha. Moral turpitude is dealt with in "Walk with Good," a soulful number that South Border plays with typical ease.

Out of place

One track that seems out of place is "Ako Pa," with Jolina Magdangal interpreting sentiments about friendship. Although the intent is to show how friendships help one deal with crucial decisions, the triteness of its teenybopper approach weakens the message.

SONGS/ E2

OPENS MAY 16
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"GRABS YOU BY THE THROAT.."
--Pete Hammond, Maxim

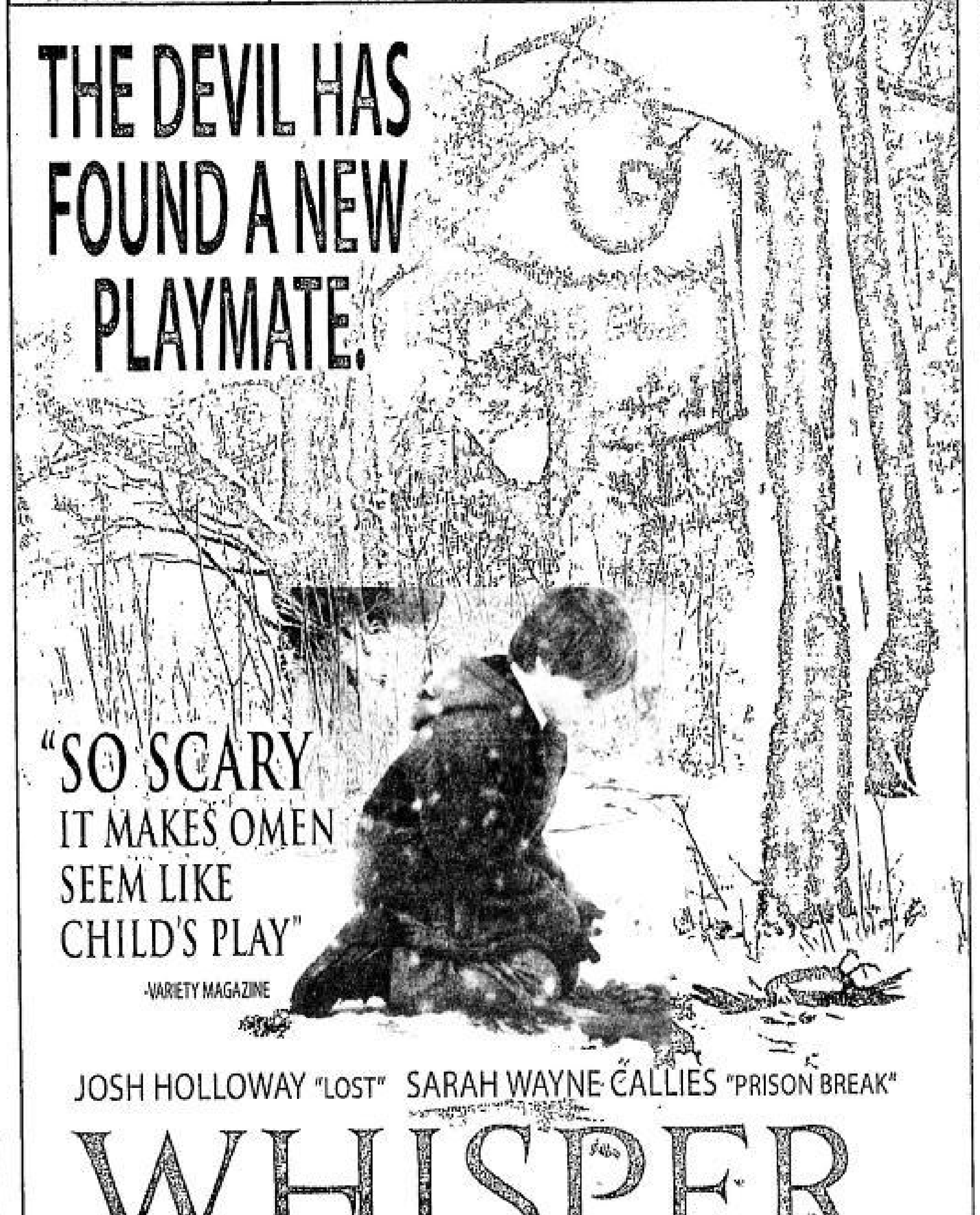
"A PROVOCATIVE GAME THAT PLAYS OUT WITH INTELLIGENCE AND WIT."
---Claudia Puig, USA Today

"AN EXCEPTIONALLY SUSPENSEFUL NAIL-BITER!"
---Rex Reed, New York Observer

HOW DO YOU CONVICT A MAN WHO HAS ALREADY BEEN PROVEN INNOCENT?
ANTHONY HOPKINS RYAN GOSLING

I SHOT MY WIFE. PROVE IT.
FRACTURE

MTRCB RATING R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE
THE DEVIL HAS FOUND A NEW PLAYMATE.


"SO SCARY IT MAKES OMEN SEEM LIKE CHILD'S PLAY"
-VARIETY MAGAZINE

JOSH HOLLOWAY "LOST" SARAH WAYNE CALLIES "PRISON BREAK"
WHISPER
IT'S THE LAST THING YOU'LL HEAR
OPENS MAY 16
VIVA

SHANG CINEPLEX

① SPIDER-MAN 3
MTRCB GP
1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30

② SPIDER-MAN 3
MTRCB GP
2.30, 5:30, 8:30

③ 28 WEEKS LATER
MTRCB R-13 12:40
3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

④ LUCKY YOU
MTRCB PG-13
1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE
SPIDER-MAN 3 (GP)
12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

Catch the Cineplex Special
"SHREK 3" TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE!
Showing on May 16, 2007 (Wednesday).
Call 633-2227 for more details

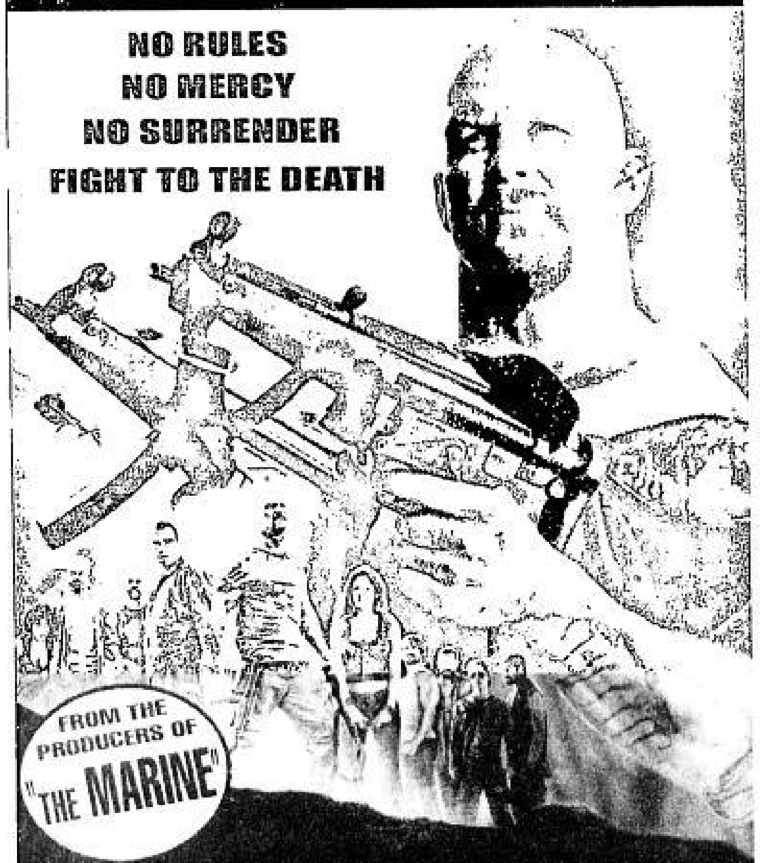
* 6th floor, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
EDSA corner Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City
Call 633-7851, loc. 171/ 170 or 633-2227
for more details.
Shangri-La Plaza

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
ROCKWELL CENTER, MAKATI TEL: 898-1440/41
DOLBY DIGITAL

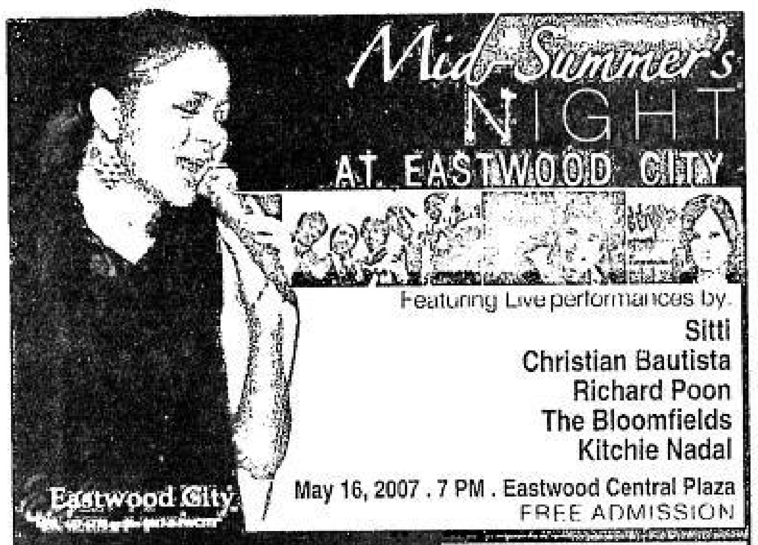
28 WEEKS LATER R13 1:40,3:50,6:00,8:10	SPIDER-MAN 3 G 12:40,3:40,6:40,9:40	SPIDER-MAN 3 G 2:50,5:50,8:50
LUCKY YOU PG13 2:45,5:20,7:55,10:30	THE CONDEMNED R13 12:50,3:15,5:40,8:05	SPIDER-MAN 3 G 1:30,4:30,7:30,10:30

MOVIES & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

MTRCB RATING R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP.
2ND WEEK
NO RULES
NO MERCY
NO SURRENDER
FIGHT TO THE DEATH


FROM THE PRODUCERS OF "THE MARINE"

WORLD WRESTLING ENTERTAINMENT (WWE)
PRESENTS
STONE COLD
STEVE AUSTIN
THE CONDEMNED



Mid-Summer's NIGHT AT EASTWOOD CITY
Featuring Live performances by:
Sitti
Christian Bautista
Richard Poon
The Bloomfields
Kitchie Nadal
May 16, 2007 . 7 PM . Eastwood Central Plaza
FREE ADMISSION

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

LUCKY YOU 2:55, 5:40, 8:25, 11:00 PG-13
SPIDER-MAN 3 1:00, 4:10, 7:20, 10:30 G
SPIDER-MAN 3 1:30, 4:40, 7:50, 11:00 G
28 WEEKS LATER 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00 R-13

To receive Eastwood City Events, Promos and Cinema schedule just text eastwood and send to 2948 for Globe, Smart & Sun Cellular subscribers

For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA
THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1 SPIDERMAN 3
10:20 , 1:10 , 4:00
6:50 , 9:40
GP

CINEMA 2 28 WEEKS LATER
10:50 , 1:05 , 3:20
5:35 , 7:50 , 10:10
R-13

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 LUCKY YOU
11:20 , 2:10 , 5:00
7:50 , 10:35
PG-13

CINEMA 4 SPIDERMAN 3
11:35 , 2:25 , 5:15
8:05 , 10:50
GP

CINEMA 5 SPIDERMAN 3
11:00 , 1:50 , 4:40
7:30 , 10:20
GP

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

May 11 & 12 , 2007	Rock the Vote " The Repeat "	8:00 PM
May 18 , 2007	CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA	8:00 PM
May 19 & 26 , 2007	OGIE ALCASID & SITTI	8:00 PM
June 15 & 16 , 2007	Rico J. Puno & Mitch Valdez	8:00 PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
May 19 , 2007	DAVE ELQUERO in Bossa Breeze w/ MYMP	7:30 PM
May 31 , 2007	RJ Jimenez	8:30 PM
May 11 , 18 , 25 , 2007	Drag : Ons	9:00 PM
JUNE 15 , 2007	Champion of the World (Jed Madela)	8:30 PM

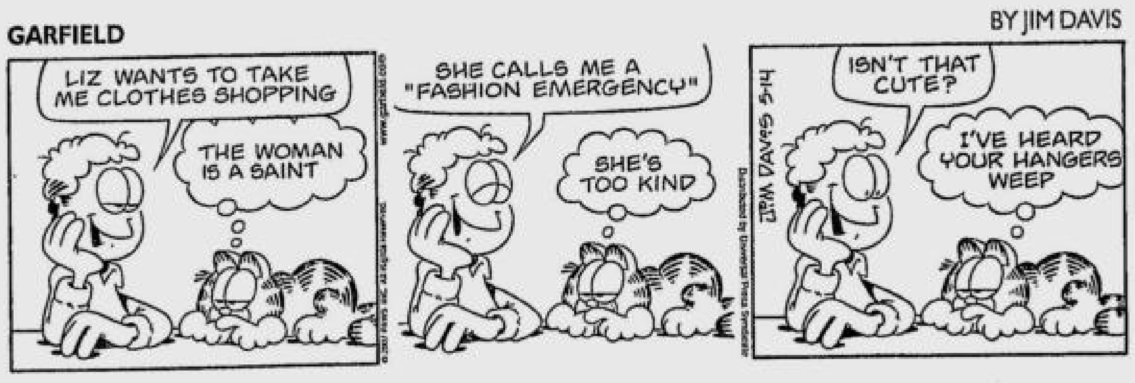
FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722-4532 LOC 116

MTRCB RATING G FOR GENERAL AUDIENCE

THE LONG WAIT IS OGRE
DREAMWORKS
SHREK 3
CATCH THE SPECIAL PREVIEW ON MAY 16 (WED) AND MAY 17 (THUR) AT YOUR FAVORITE THEATERS
DREAMWORKS ANIMATION SKG
PDI
shrek.com
Solar Entertainment Corporation
IN THEATERS MAY 18

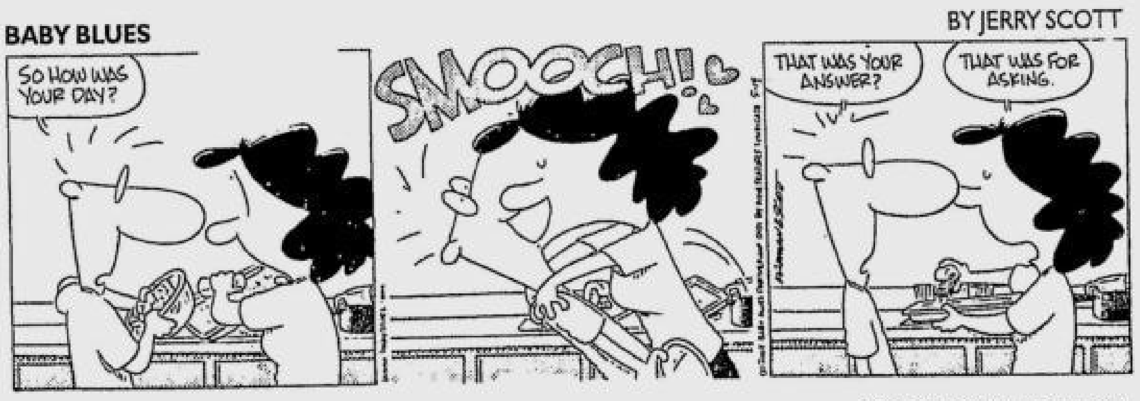
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


LIZ WANTS TO TAKE ME CLOTHES SHOPPING
THE WOMAN IS A SAINT
SHE CALLS ME A "FASHION EMERGENCY"
SHE'S TOO KIND
ISN'T THAT CUTE?
I'VE HEARD YOUR HANGERS WEEP
JIM DAVIS 5-14

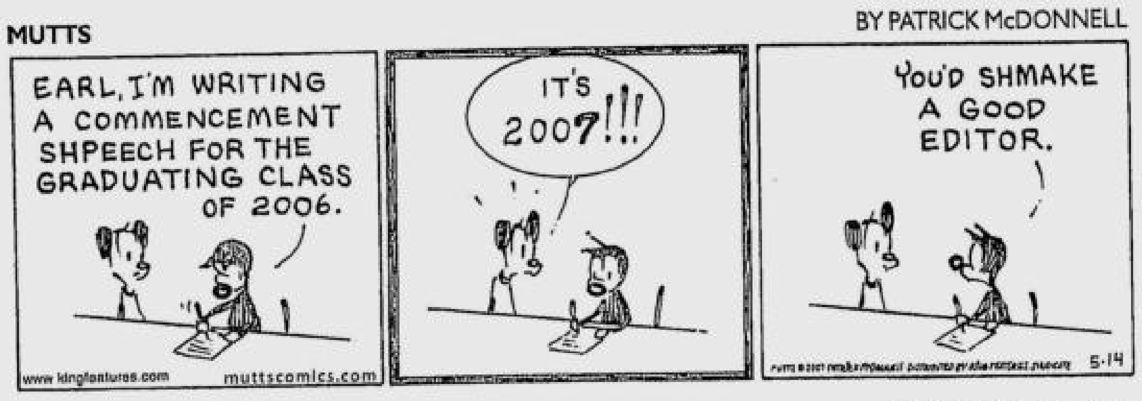
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


SO HOW WAS YOUR DAY?
SMOOCH!
THAT WAS YOUR ANSWER?
THAT WAS FOR ASKING.

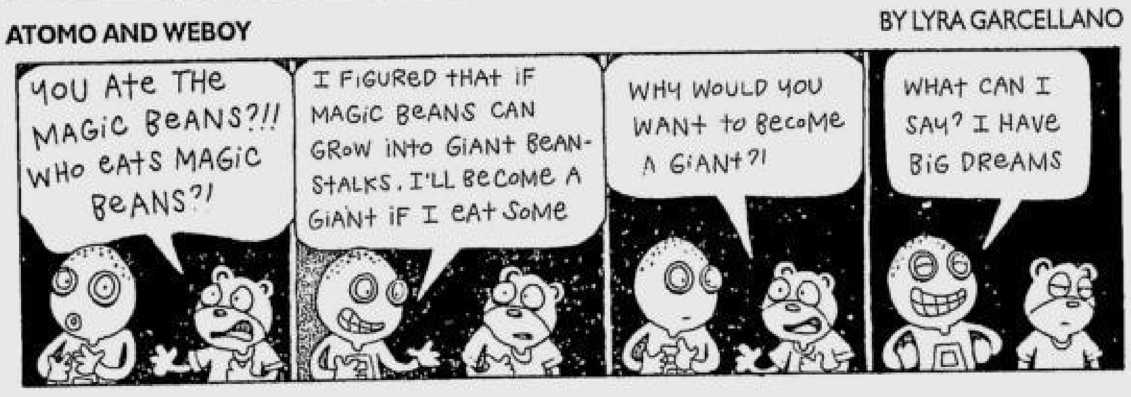
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


EARL, I'M WRITING A COMMENCEMENT SHPEECH FOR THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2006.
IT'S 2007!!!
YOU'D SHMAKE A GOOD EDITOR.
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
5·14

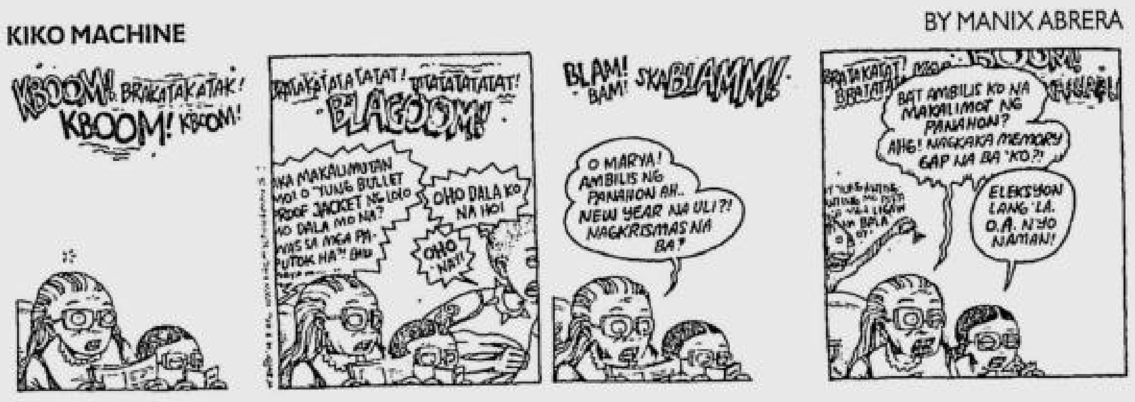
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


YOU ATE THE MAGIC BEANS?!! WHO EATS MAGIC BEANS?!
I FIGURED THAT IF MAGIC BEANS CAN GROW INTO GIANT BEANSTALKS. I'LL BECOME A GIANT IF I EAT SOME
WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO BECOME A GIANT?!
WHAT CAN I SAY? I HAVE BIG DREAMS

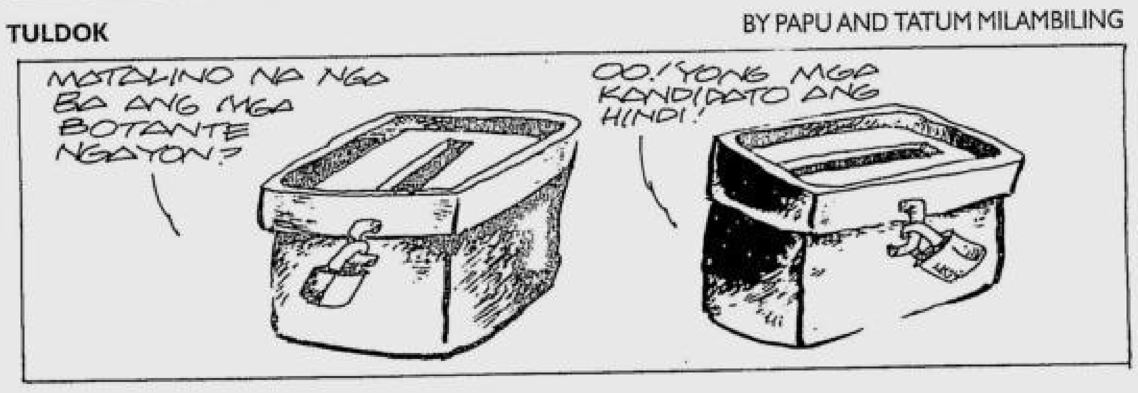
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


KBOOM! BRRAKATAKATAK! KBOOM! KBOOM!
TATATATATATAT! TATATATATATAT! BLAGOOM!
OHO DALA KO NA HO!
OHO NA!
BLAM! BAM! SKABLAMM!
O MARYA! AMBILIS NG PANAHON AH.. NEW YEAR NA ULI?! NAGKRISMAS NA BA?
BAT AMBILIS KO NA MAKALIMOT NG PANAHON? AHG! NAGKAKA MEMORY GAP NA BA 'KO?!
ELEKSYON LANG 'LA. O.A. N'YO NAMAN!

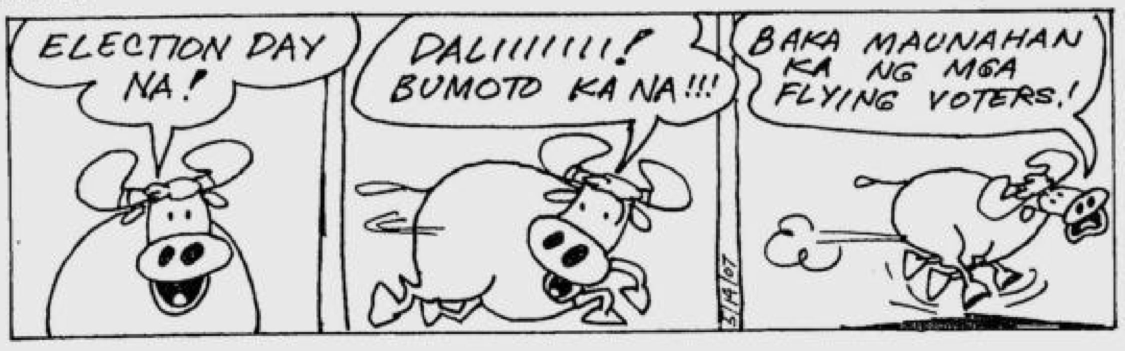
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


MATALINO NA NGA BA ANG MGA BOTANTE NGAYON?
OO! YONG MGA KANDIDATO ANG HINDI!

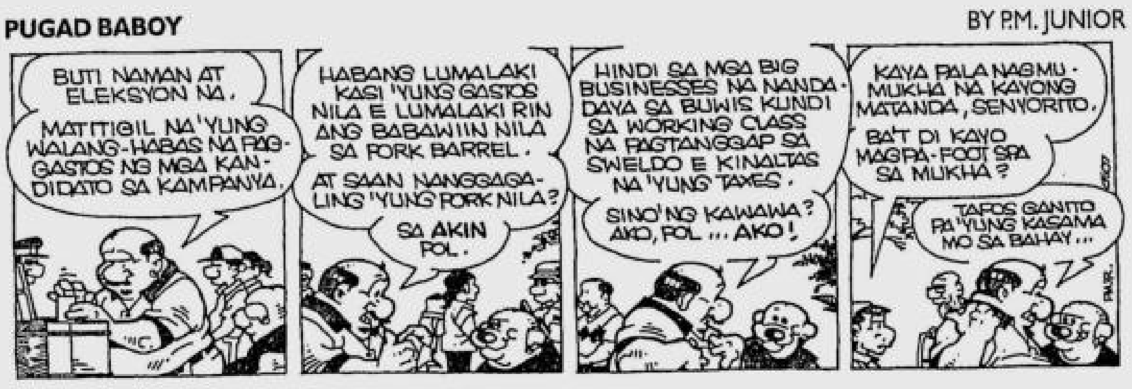
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ELECTION DAY NA!
DALIIIIIII! BUMOTO KA NA!!!
BAKA MAUNAHAN KA NG MGA FLYING VOTERS!
5/14/07

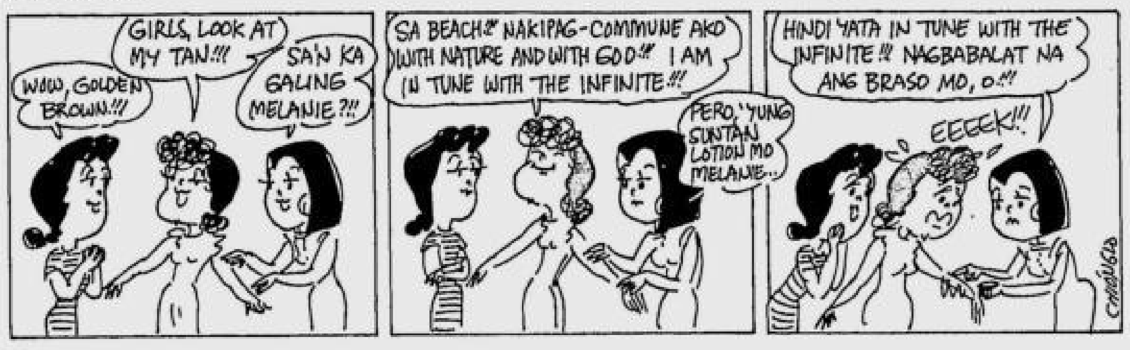
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


BUTI NAMAN AT ELEKSYON NA.
MATITIGIL NA 'YUNG WALANG-HABAS NA PAGGASTOS NG MGA KANDIDATO SA KAMPANYA.
HABANG LUMALAKI KASI 'YUNG GASTOS NILA E LUMALAKI RIN ANG BABAWIIN NILA SA PORK BARREL.
AT SAAN NANGGAGALING 'YUNG PORK NILA?
SA AKIN POL.
HINDI SA MGA BIG BUSINESSES NA NANDADAYA SA BUWIS KUNDI SA WORKING CLASS NA PAGTANGGAP SA SWELDO E KINALTAS NA 'YUNG TAXES.
SINO'NG KAWAWA? AKO, POL ... AKO!
KAYA PALA NAGMUMUKHA NA KAYONG MATANDA, SENYORITO.
BA'T DI KAYO MAGPA-FOOT SPA SA MUKHA?
TAPOS GANITO PA 'YUNG KASAMA MO SA BAHAY...

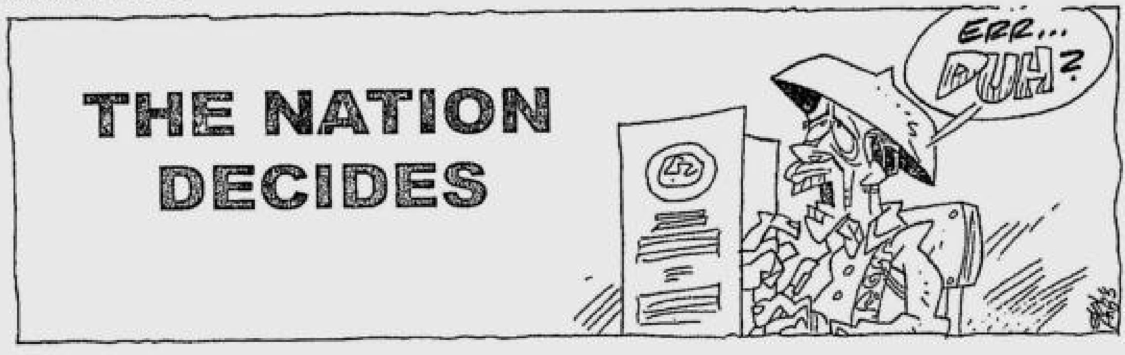
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


WOW, GOLDEN BROWN!!!
GIRLS, LOOK AT MY TAN!!!
SA'N KA GALING MELANIE?!!
SA BEACH!! NAKIPAG-COMMUNE AKO WITH NATURE AND WITH GOD!! I AM IN TUNE WITH THE INFINITE!!!
PERO, 'YUNG SUNTAN LOTION MO MELANIE...
HINDI YATA IN TUNE WITH THE INFINITE!!! NAGBABALAT NA ANG BRASO MO, O!!!
EEEEK!!!
CHIONGLO

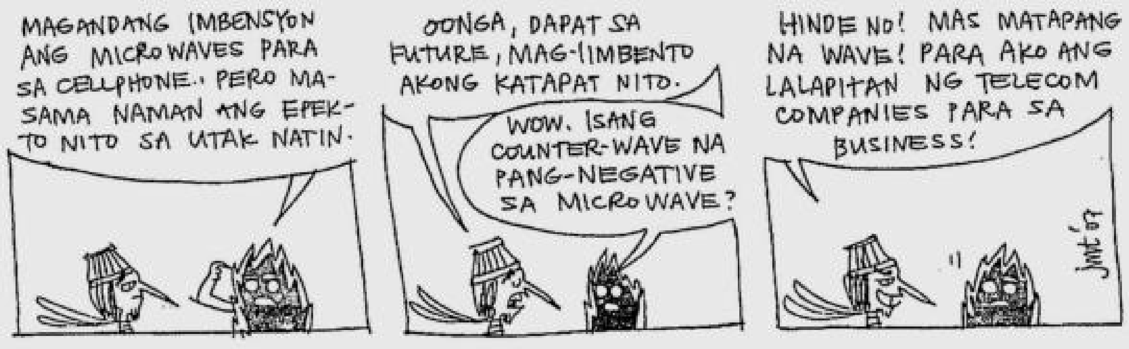
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


THE NATION DECIDES
ERR... DUH?

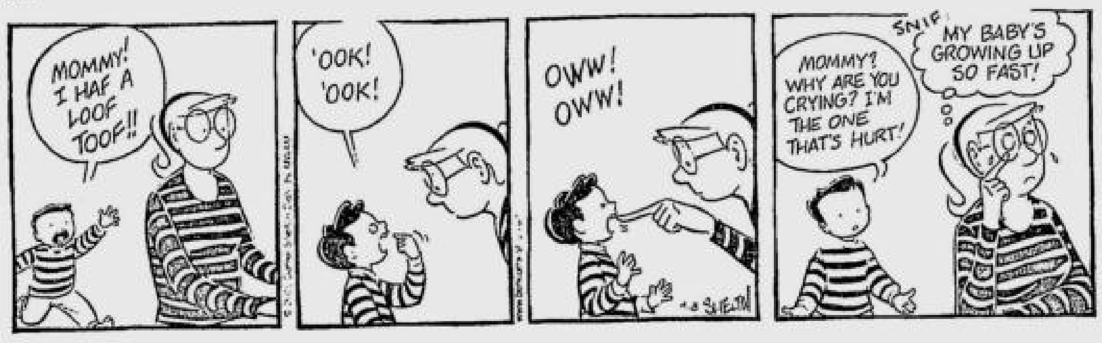
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MAGANDANG IMBENSYON ANG MICROWAVES PARA SA CELLPHONE. PERO MASAMA NAMAN ANG EPEKTO NITO SA UTAK NATIN.
OONGA, DAPAT SA FUTURE, MAG-IMBENTO AKONG KATAPAT NITO.
WOW. ISANG COUNTER-WAVE NA PANG-NEGATIVE SA MICROWAVE?
HINDE NO! MAS MATAPANG NA WAVE! PARA AKO ANG LALAPITAN NG TELECOM COMPANIES PARA SA BUSINESS!
JMT '07

BEN

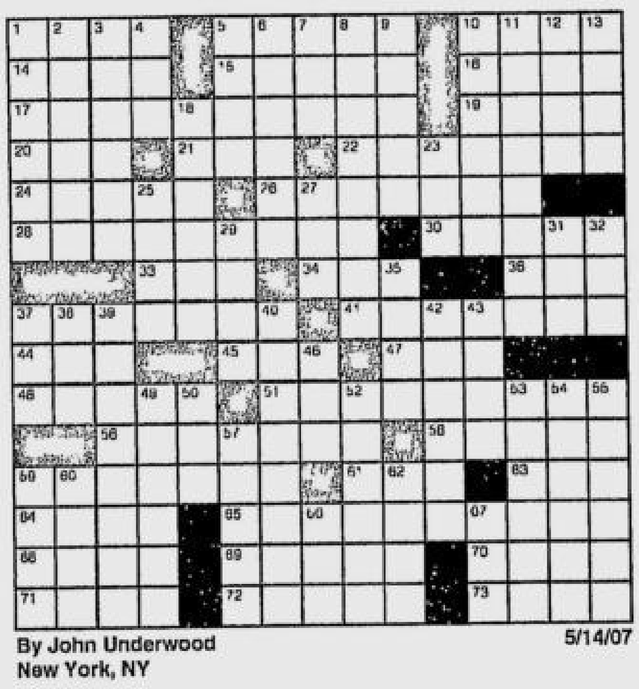
BY DANIEL SHELTON


MOMMY! I HAF A LOOF TOOF!!
'OOK! 'OOK!
OWW! OWW!
MOMMY? WHY ARE YOU CRYING? I'M THE ONE THAT'S HURT!
SNIF
MY BABY'S GROWING UP SO FAST!
SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 McGregor of "Emma"
5 Canines or fangs
10 Go for the gold?
14 Nursemaid
15 January in Juarez
16 Oklahoma neighbor of Vance AFB
17 Everywhere
19 Declaim wildly
20 N.L. East team
21 Old Pontiac
22 Peter of "Spartacus"
24 Love in Leipzig
26 Spring back
28 Everybody
30 Drunken
33 URL ending
34 Opposite of masc.
36 Purpose
37 Exercise a pull
41 Musical pieces
44 Thai ethnic group
45 Play about Capote
47 Popular ISP
48 Ancient calculators
51 Changeable
56 Incipient
58 Andrea, the dictator of Genoa
59 Part of FCC
61 Connect
63 Doc's drug book
64 Kennel din
65 Occasionally
68 Lively circle dance
69 Keep clear of
70 Java neighbor
71 Portal
72 Bruce or Wilkens
73 Writer Seton

DOWN
1 Circle with light
2 Ricky Nelson hit, "__ in School"
3 "Sense and Sensibility" director
4 Uh-uh!
5 Camp quarters
6 "Bewitched" grandmother
7 Grownup elver
8 Disturbs
9 In what way?
10 Fine wool
11 Intermittently appearing
12 Baja baby boy
13 1999 Ron Howard satire
18 To-do list
23 Old boat
25 Boxer Max
27 Santa's helper
29 Conduit
31 Gabor half-sister?
32 Definitely!
35 Lament
37 Tenn. neighbor
38 Keyboard key
39 Continuously swinging
40 Sweetheart
42 Greeted silently
43 Ray of "Battle Cry"
46 Former Ind. TV network
49 Funny Sid
50 Syr. neighbor
52 Achieve
53 Foundling
54 Far and near
55 C.S. Lewis location
57 Water passage
59 Saudi leader
60 Switch tail?
62 500-mile race
66 Placed first
67 TV Guide abbr.



By John Underwood
New York, NY

5/14/07

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

S	T	A	L	E	M	A	T	E	■	C	L	A	E	S
H	A	L	I	T	O	S	I	S	■	R	O	L	L	O
E	M	I	N	E	N	C	E	S	■	E	N	D	E	R
D	I	N	E	■	G	E	R	E	■	S	I	E	V	E
S	L	E	N	D	E	R	■	S	A	S	■	B	A	H
■	■	■	■	A	R	T	S	■	S	E	N	A	T	E
D	U	R	U	M	■	A	U	D	I	T	O	R	I	A
I	N	A	S	■	F	I	R	E	S	■	L	A	N	D
S	I	D	E	L	I	N	E	S	■	S	O	N	G	S
S	N	I	D	E	R	■	R	E	S	T	■	■	■	■
E	S	A	■	A	M	S	■	C	A	R	C	A	S	S
M	U	T	E	S	■	H	E	R	L	■	A	L	T	I
B	R	I	B	E	■	O	R	A	T	O	R	I	A	N
L	E	V	A	R	■	E	S	T	E	S	P	A	R	K
E	D	E	N	S	■	S	E	E	R	E	S	S	E	S

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5/14/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: In whatever you do, you're a perfectionist. You push yourself hard to achieve your goals. Your view of things is very modern and advanced. You're energetic; obstacles will not deter you. You love the lore of tradition, but never hesitate to break from it. The year ahead is full of new possibilities and fresh beginnings. Open any door!
Birthdate of: George Lucas, film director; Cate Blanchett, actress; Sofia Coppola, director.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might be contemplating a major purchase because you're giving a lot of thought to your cash flow and your earnings. Don't make the mistake of identifying with your possessions. They are not you.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is your time to energize yourself and recharge your batteries for the rest of the year. Do whatever makes you feel great. It's your time in the sun!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You need more time alone or in solitude than you usually do. You have a lot to think about. You want to ponder what you want your new year to bring.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Friends are important to you at this time. And, of course, this will flow both ways—you are likewise important to others. Accept all invitations. Enjoy your increased popularity!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): With the Sun at high noon in your chart, people definitely notice you now. VIPs, parents, teachers and bosses are impressed with you. Milk this for all its worth!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Something related to foreign countries, travel, higher education, publishing and the law intrigue you now. Do what you can while you have this strong focus.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're concerned about the earnings of a partner or the wealth of others at this time. At a deep level, you might have a basic disagreement with somebody else's values. It's a touchy subject.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Because the Sun is opposite your sign right now, you're definitely focused on partners and close friends. Observe your style of relating; you can learn something about yourself now.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You've got increased energy to get organized. Therefore, use it! Tackle the tasks that need to be done with enthusiasm and vigor.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're in the mood for a vacation, especially a romantic vacation. (Join the club; we number in the millions.) Give yourself permission to have a good time!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): It's totally appropriate to continue to be focused on home, family and domestic matters now. That's just what's happening for your sign. Talk to parents and relatives.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're eager to enlighten someone about something. You have something to say. This helps those of you who teach, sell, market, write or act.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

			4	2	7		6	
6	7					2	9	
	2		9					
1				7		9		6
7			6		2			8
4		6		5				3
					8		7	
	4	3					1	9
	1		2	4	9			

Difficulty Level ★

5/14

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program át www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

6	2	9	4	1	3	5	7	8
5	3	4	8	9	7	6	1	2
8	1	7	5	2	6	9	3	4
1	9	5	7	4	8	2	6	3
2	4	3	6	5	1	8	9	7
7	6	8	2	3	9	4	5	1
3	5	6	1	8	4	7	2	9
4	7	1	9	6	2	3	8	5
9	8	2	3	7	5	1	4	6

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

SMART Buddy

Ang Saya!

SPIDER-MAN 3

IN THEATERS MAY 1, 2007
www.sonypictures.com.ph

ONLY SMART BUDDY TAKES YOU ON THE ULTIMATE SPIN THIS SUMMER!

Text SPIDER to 239

to get the SPIDER-MAN 3 tone and subscribe to tones*. P15/week. Plus, get a free Jolly Krunchy Twirl!

*For polytone, text SPIDERPOLY.

Promo duration: April 15 - May 15, 2007.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1398, Series of 2007.

Enjoy other SPIDER-MAN 3 stuff for your cellphone. Download now!

ANIMATED SCREENSAVERS
Text MMS <keyword> to 239. Example: MMS VENOM

BUILDING · GOBLINFACE · SANDMAN
PETERBLACK · VENOM · SPIDEYRAIN

JAVA GAME

Spider-Man 3 Java Game
To download, text SPIDERGAME to 239

Set SMART MMS & GPRS settings in your cellfone:
Text SET <phone model> to 211. Ex. SET N70

Watch the SPIDER-MAN 3 movie trailer and more!
Just text SPIDER3G to 239

For more SPIDER-MAN 3 downloads, go to http://wap.smart.com.ph/spiderman

Animated Screensavers are P15 each. Java Game is P50.

Buddy Cinema Club

Join the SMART Buddy Cinema Club and get firsthand info on the next movie blockbuster! Plus, get a chance to be one of our winners in the monthly draws for free movie passes and exclusive movie-themed premiums!
Join now to get more raffle entries and more chances of winning!

Just text JOIN to 239!
(P2.50 per week only)

Promo duration is from February 1 to January 2, 2008
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0382, Series of 2007.

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MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX

1	SPIDER-MAN 3
2	SPIDER-MAN 3
3	28 WEEKS LATER
4	LUCKY YOU

PREMIERE

	SPIDER-MAN 3

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	SPIDER-MAN-3
2	SPIDER-MAN-3
3	PAN'S LABYRINTH

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449348)

1	SPIDER-MAN-3
2	SPIDER-MAN-3

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1	SPIDER-MAN-3
2	SPIDER-MAN-3
3	THE CHANTING
4	SPIDER-MAN-3

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, China Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1	SPIDER-MAN-3
2	SPIDER-MAN-3
3	28 WEEKS LATER
4	CONDEMNED

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	SPIDER-MAN-3
2	SPIDER-MAN-3

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

1	LUCKY YOU
2	SPIDER-MAN-3
3	SPIDER-MAN-3
4	28 WEEKS LATER

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7268160

3	SPIDER-MAN-3
4	CONDEMNED
5	RESERVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504286, 8433094

1	THE SHOOTER
2	SPIDER-MAN-3
3	SPIDER-MAN-3
4	28 WEEKS LATER

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	SUNSHINE
2	SPIDER-MAN-3
3	SPIDER-MAN-3
4	

THEATRES

1	SPIDER-MAN-3
2	SPIDER-MAN-3
3	SUNSHINE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111148

1	RESERVED
2	RESERVED
3	RESERVED
4	RESERVED

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC

☆	SPIDER-MAN-3
☆	SPIDER-MAN-3
☆	RESRVED
☆	RESRVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	SPIDER-MAN-3
2	TURISTAS
3	SPIDER-MAN-3

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	ROCKY BALBOA
2	THE CHANTING
3	SPIDER-MAN-3
4	SPIDER-MAN-3

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1	SPIDER-MAN-3
2	SPIDER-MAN-3
3	SPIDER-MAN-3
4	28 WEEKS LATER
5	THE CONDEMNED
6	SPIDER-MAN-3
7	LUCKY YOU
8	THE REAPING
9	WILD HOGS
10	PERFECT STRANGER

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1	SPIDER-MAN-3
2	THE REAPING
3	SPIDER-MAN-3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4887736

1	SPIDER-MAN-3
2	SPIDER-MAN-3

Llanas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4746

1	THE HILLS HAVE EYES
2	ANG CUTE NG INA MO

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY)	THE CONDEMNED
2 (DOLBY)	SPIDER-MAN-3
3 (DOLBY)	28 WEEKS LATER
4 (DOLBY)	SPIDER-MAN-3

Llanas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1	SPIDER-MAN-3
2	MASAHISTA
3	BIGLANG LIKO
4	RUMBLE BOYS

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228

1	SPIDER-MAN-3
2	SPIDER-MAN-3
3	28 WEEKS LATER
4	LUCKY YOU
5	THE CONDEMNED

Llanas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1	SPIDER-MAN-3
2	BASA SA DAGAT
3	SUNSHINE
4	KATAS
5	SATANICA

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	PICK UP GIRL
2	SPIDER-MAN-3
3	SUNSHINE
4	SPIDER-MAN-3

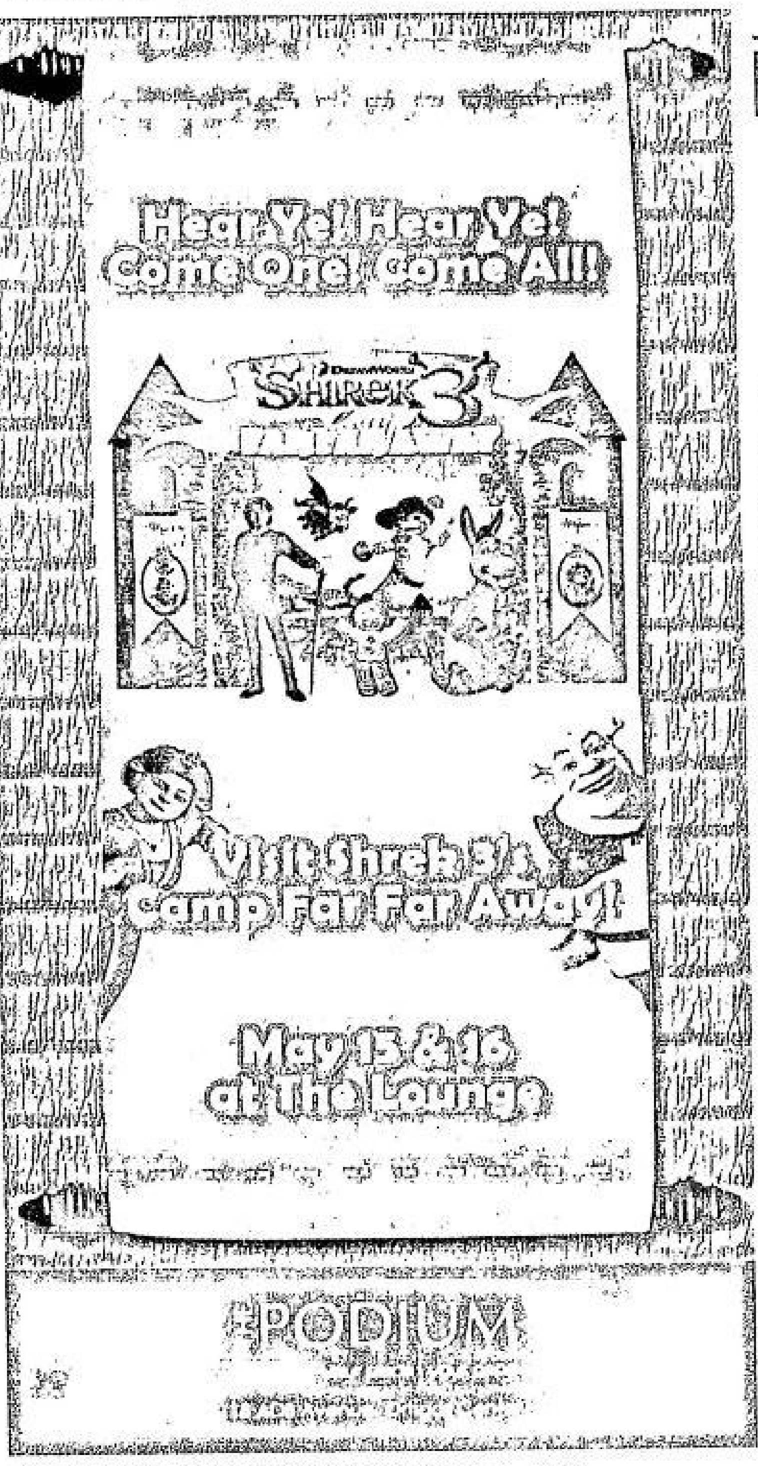
MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	ZOMBIES
2	SPIDER-MAN-3
3	SPIDER-MAN-3
4	RESERVED

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	SPIDER-MAN-3
2	SATANICA

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE



Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Come One! Come All!

DreamWorks SHREK 3

Visit Shrek 3's Camp Far Far Away!

May 15 & 16 at the Lounge

PODIUM

KID FIT

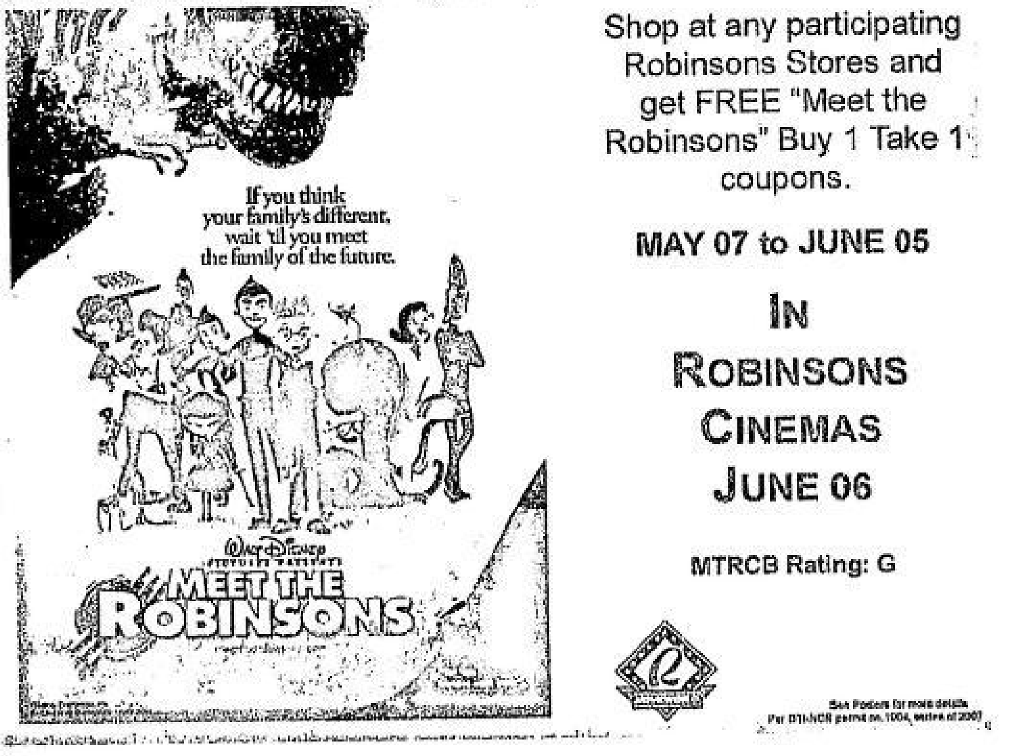
Oldies by kids

MAK & THE DUDES brings back the good old tunes of yesteryears in the album "Oldies but Kiddies."

Mak (Makisig Morales) is joined in the group by friends Jairus, Pareng Jomar in "Superinggo" and the young Reyver Cruz in "Rounin"; Robert, grand champion of "Little Big Star Season 2"; Kyle, finalist of "Little Big Star Season 1"; and Rhap, grand champion of "Little Big Star Season 1."

They sings pop hits from the '50s, '60s and '70s, including "Breaking Up Is Hard To Do," "Oh! Carol," "Diana" and their version of ABS-CBN's Summer Station ID, "Araw Natin 'To."

Minus one tracks are also included in the Star Records release, available at P199 in record bars.



If you think your family's different, wait 'til you meet the family of the future.

Walt Disney Pictures presents MEET THE ROBINSONS

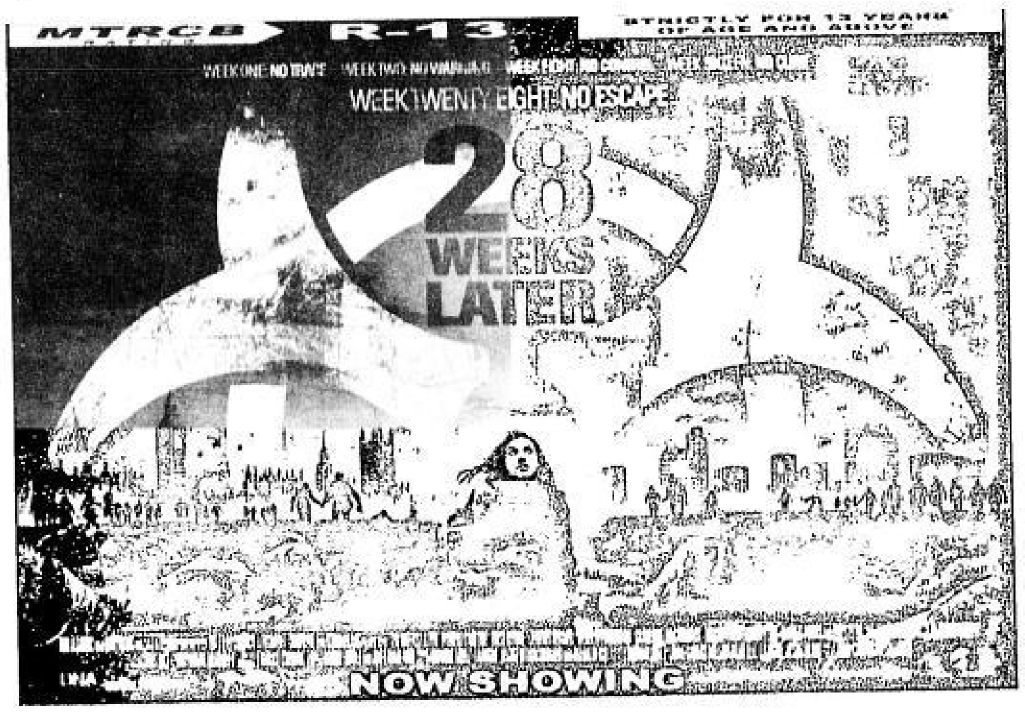
Shop at any participating Robinsons Stores and get FREE "Meet the Robinsons" Buy 1 Take 1 coupons.

MAY 07 to JUNE 05

IN ROBINSONS CINEMAS JUNE 06

MTRCB Rating: G

See Posters for more details.
Per DTI-NCR permit no. 1004, series of 2007



MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE

WEEK ONE NO TRACE · WEEK TWO NO WARNING

WEEK TWENTY EIGHT NO ESCAPE

28 WEEKS LATER

NOW SHOWING

Araneta Center

Gateway · Ali MALL · Farmers Plaza
gatewaymall.com.ph

Gateway CINEPLEX*10

LARGEST CURVED SCREEN 70 FT WIDE 30 FT HIGH
EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

Film	Schedule
SPIDERMAN 3	12:40 / 1:10 / 1:35 / 2:10 / 2:35 3:35 / 4:05 / 4:30 / 5:05 / 5:30 / 6:30 / 7:00 7:25 / 8:00 / 8:25 / 9:25 / 9:55 / 10:20
CONDEMNED	1:30 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:30
LUCKY YOU	12:50 / 3:40 / 6:30 / 9:20
28 WEEKS LATER	1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50
PERFECT STRANGER	1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40
SPIDERMAN 3	12:15 3:10 / 6:05 / 9:00

DOLBY DIGITAL·EX

Ali MALL 5

Cinema	Film	Schedule
1	28 WEEKS LATER	12:05 / 2:15 / 4:25 / 6:35 / 8:45
2	SPIDERMAN 3	12:40 / 3:20 / 6:00 / 8:40
3	SPIDERMAN 3	2:40 / 5:20 / 8:00
4	ANG CUTE NG INA MO	12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30
5	CONDEMNED	12:45 / 3:25 / 6:05 / 8:45

DOLBY DIGITAL · dts · SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM
www.aranetacoliseum.com

PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE	PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE
MAY 16 2007, WEDNESDAY	MAY 18 2007, FRIDAY
4:35 PM - Sta Lucia vs. Welcoat ; 7:20 PM - Talk N Txt vs. Air 21	4:35 PM - Welcoat vs. Red Bull ; 7:20 PM - Alaska vs. Pure foods